



Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

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Romala Hollywood,

I would like to raise my concerns regarding a stormwater retention basin and discharge pipe easement recently constructed in Bullaburra as part of the Roads and Maritime Services' Great Western Highway upgrade program. Discharge from this retention basin is released stormwater into a Blue Mountains Swamp and associated drainage line located above Red Gum Park in Bullaburra.

Blue Mountains Swamps are highly sensitive ecosystems, which are listed as Vulnerable Ecological Communities under the New South Wales *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* and Endangered Ecological Communities under the Commonwealth EPBC Act 1999. Many of these unique Blue Mountains Swamps are of high conservation concern, particularly those within or adjoining urban areas. Many of their fauna and flora species are listed as threatened. These threatened species, including Blue Mountains Water Skinks and Giant Dragonflies, are restricted to these swamp communities and are highly susceptible to the impacts of urban development. The impacts of urban development on the natural environment are well documented, with increased impervious surfaces, pollutant loads and sediment run off resulting in what is known as Urban Stream Syndrome.

The small swamp community set at the top of Red Gum Park, Bullaburra is already suffering from invasive weed growth and sedimentation and is a recorded site for the endangered Giant Dragonfly and Blue Mountains Water Skink.

Concerns over the viability and stability of the drainage easement and release point of the stormwater run-off in to the swamp is of much concern.

On a recent visit to the swamp in mention, high loads of sediment are visibly washing into the upper parts of the swamp. The upper holding pond seems to capture much of the sediment prior to discharge from the outlet point above the easement, but the

easement itself seems to be inadequate at best and is contributing to further sedimentation. It is a basic construction with many of its water retention mechanisms already degrading and allowing sediment from the surrounding unstable run off area to impact the swamp. Small bags of blue metal and hessian swales are in place, as for stone and cement walls, though they are already degrading and adding to the pollutants being washed into the swamp.

This excess sediment build up is going to contribute to the growth of invasive weeds in the swamp and further degrade the creek system and the habitat for swamp dependent species, such as the Blue Mountains Water Skink and Giant Dragonfly. High levels of road pollutants and excess nutrients are more than likely also making their way through the impoundment and into the swamp via the easement. Pollutants also directly related to the poor construction practices and or materials used are also now contributing to the list of pollutants entering the swamp at this point. These pollutants will impact water quality in the swamp, nutrient loads will also increase and help support the growth of invasive weed species into the future.

Of most concern is;

- Is the retention pond and discharge-pipe easement temporary or permanent, as this is far from adequate as a long term solution, as it is currently not working over the short term?
- Is council aware that the easement is currently not adequately stopping the flow of sediment into the Swamp?
- If this is permanent, is council aware that many of the materials used are already degrading and adding to pollutants being released into the Swamp?
- If this is temporary, will remediation of the upper sediment affected parts of the swamp be concluded and who will conduct this remediation?

Regards,

Mr Nakia Belmer

Threatened species officer, Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

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