

BEECROFT CHELTENHAM CIVIC TRUST INC

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BULLETIN 3

September 2014

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50 Years of Community Action Get Active and Fight to Protect your Community

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In this Bulletin:

- Public Meeting – Thurs 9 Oct, Beecroft Presbyterian hall – The Future of Beecroft and Cheltenham.
- Fighting to save our heritage.
- NorthConnex – submissions due 12 Sept.
- 10/50 Law - Will Hornsby Council take a leaf out of Mosman Council's response?
- Post Box at Cheltenham gone! Historic Palm moved.
- Join the Trust.

Apology. One of the numbers for the **Beecroft Garden Club** in the last Bulletin was incorrect. The second number should be 9484 7595.

Public Meeting - Thursday 9 October, Beecroft Presbyterian Hall, Wellham St. 7.30pm The Future of Beecroft and Cheltenham

With so many changes affecting our community, we want to hear your views. Come and find out what is happening and what you can do about it. Our Federal and State MPs have been invited as well as the Mayor and Hornsby Councillors. We hope this is the first of regular community meetings.

Fighting to Save Our Heritage

The Trust is most concerned that Hornsby Council and the Joint Regional Planning Panel (JRPP) are of the view that they can demolish a heritage house, 81 Beecroft Rd, within the Beecroft Cheltenham Heritage Conservation Area without first conducting a heritage assessment. We have had advice from both The National Trust and Mr Graham Brooks, Heritage Consultant, that this building is a significant contributory item to the statutory Heritage Conservation Area and, despite the site being rezoned for high density housing, a heritage assessment must be made before demolition is considered. Not doing so would be a breach of the Environmental Protection and Assessment Act. We have written to the Minister for Planning, Pru Goward, to intervene as a matter of urgency and direct the JRPP to review their decision of 14 August. Greg Smith has also pressed this point with the Minister on our behalf.



The JRPP deferred their decision on this development application solely to gain more information on the magnificent old White Mahogany at the rear of the Garden Centre, 83 Beecroft Rd. We were astounded to hear that Council actually encouraged the developer to buy the rear of 83, a heritage listed property, and would allow the removal of this tree. It is an important part of the curtilage of that building and must be saved.

81 Beecroft Rd

NorthConnex M1-M2 Tunnel

Local residents are concerned at the core drilling taking place near Pennant Hills Rd. This is to check the stability of the sandstone. The proposed tunnel is at conservable depth under most homes along the route. A local community group SCAPS, www.scapsgroup.org, Concerned Residents Group Southern Interchange Community, has formed to fight pollution from the unfiltered stack and other issues. Some of these issues are listed below.

Submissions on the EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) close on 12 September. Address to: Department of Planning and Environment, Major Project Assessment, Attn: Assessing Officer, Application No SSI136136, GPO Box 39 Sydney 2001 or www.majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au

Have your say. Issues you might consider:

Air Quality

- Air quality in the tunnel will be monitored continuously for the operational life of the tunnel but the air quality along Pennant Hills Road will only be monitored for 12 months. This needs to be for the operational life of the tunnel so that health and other impacts can be assessed. Ongoing monitoring must be by an independent authority, available for public scrutiny and not be turned off.
- How can an automated air monitoring station, like the one at Observatory Park, cost a reported \$3000 a week to operate? Why can't these be placed on land owned by NorthConnex?
- The tunnel, 9km long, will not be filtered. Diesel fumes are carcinogenic (cancer causing) and called the 'new asbestos'. Concentrated emissions will come from the unfiltered stacks at the southern (near Pennant Hills Golf Club) and northern end (Wahroonga) and drift onto nearby residences. It must be filtered.
- No modelling has been done to show either the drift of emissions from the stacks or what would happen if a vehicle caught fire in the tunnel,
- NorthConnex claims a reduction in emission pollution which will counter the increase in traffic. Where is the evidence for this? The claimed benefit of a reduction in total pollution in tunnels due to the speeding up of traffic is quickly lost if traffic slows due to increased use of the tunnel.
- No assessment of the impact of emissions on health has been made.

Construction Traffic

- The construction traffic route proposed by NorthConnex uses local suburban streets that are already at a standstill during peak hour and will add 50 heavy vehicle movements per hour in morning peak and more than 1,800 vehicle movements per day for up to 5 years during the construction period.
- No decision has been made on where the tunnel spoil will be dumped.

The Process

- This was an unsolicited bid from Transurban. There was no cost benefit analysis as required by the EP&A Act.
- There was no consideration of the real solution to take traffic out of the urban area - the western option from Dean Park to north of the Hawkesbury River.

Rural Fire Service 10/50 Clearing Code of Practice

Stop the Madness. Mosman Council is pushing for an exemption –Will Hornsby?

The Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust has been active for 50 years in protecting the heritage, environment and character of Beecroft and Cheltenham. We were horrified to hear that the NSW Government passed this law on 1st August without any announcement or community consultation. In areas declared fire prone, landowners can clear trees within 10m of habitable building and vegetation within 50m. This is ostensibly to protect homes from bushfires. However, that areas declared fire prone have been increased and now encompass some 96% of Cheltenham and 90% of Beecroft. It includes areas which are never likely to be affected by fire. We have very substantial concerns with the impact this will have on our suburbs, known for their bushland. It will affect large swathes of sensitive and valued bushland including 85% of Hornsby Shire and many other parts of Sydney. We have asked that a halt be imposed on this legislation until the consequences are fully examined.

Our concerns are:

1. The scheme does not address the reality of bushfire risk and may reduce the adoption of more effective measures against bushfires.
2. It allows widespread clearing of trees and vegetation in large suburban areas which in reality are extremely unlikely to be affected at risk from bushfire.
3. It adds a 250m buffer to the existing 100m buffer around previously declared fire prone areas.
4. It fails to consider environmental and heritage importance of trees, biodiversity, wildlife habitats and soil erosion which may occur with clearing sloping land.
5. It fails to consider measures already in place to ensure fire mitigation in houses and buildings adjoining bushland and bushfire prevention measures such as controlled burning, community fire pumps and training.

The Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust requests that the Government put an immediate halt to implementing this legislation. It allows landowners excessive and unwarranted ability to remove trees, regardless of their contribution to bushfire risk. This will result in loss of biodiversity and environmental damage. It needs to be reconsidered so that these undesirable consequences are avoided.

We would suggest:

- Making a distinction in policy between rural and urban areas.
- Considering exemptions for sensitive and endangered species, wildlife corridors and heritage areas.
- Redrawing the maps of fire prone areas so that they more accurately reflect fire risk. If the existing maps are to be used, the additional 250m buffer zone should be removed.
- Considering exemptions where Councils have implemented measures to mitigate fire risk.
- Encouraging more fire mitigation measures.
- Returning control for local issues to Councils.

Please write to Greg Smith, the Mayor and your C ward Councillors requesting Government put a halt to this legislation and that Hornsby Shire and the Beecroft Cheltenham Heritage Area be declared exempt .

Greg Smith: epping@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Mayor: srussell@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

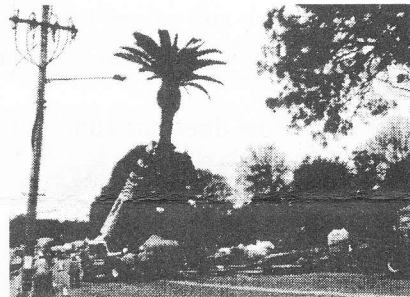
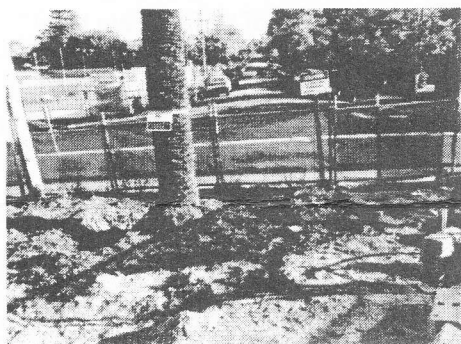
Councillors: mhutchence@hornsby.nsw.gov.au ; jcox@hornsby.nw.gov.au ; bazizi@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

Post Box at Cheltenham Station GONE!

For years, Cheltenham residents have had a post box at the station in The Crescent. It has suddenly and without warning gone. Enquiries by the Trust to ETTA found that it was removed because of the construction work at Cheltenham. Surely Australia Post and the ETTA could have relocated it to Cheltenham Rd or The Boulevard. Now the only post box in Cheltenham is in Cheltenham Rd, on the western side of Beecroft Rd.

Historic Palm Moved at Cheltenham

It is good news that ETTA was able to save the last of the three historic palm trees at Cheltenham. This tree was planted across from the end of the Boulevard to improve the vista s one drove down. It was saved by local intervention and the assistance of Philip Ruddock and has been transplanted opposite the station.



The move and historic artefact found.

Thanks to Michael Bianchino for these photographs



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