



Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

ABN 38 686 119 087

PO Box 29 Wentworth Falls NSW 2782

Phone: (02) 4757 1872

E-Mail: bmcs@bluemountains.org.au Web Site: www.bluemountains.org.au

Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

To: Mr Robert Greenwood, General Manager
Blue Mountains City Council
Locked Bag 1005
Katoomba NSW 2780
Email to: council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

May 2, 2016

Dear Mr Greenwood

URGENT: Vegetation clearing at 18-20 Old Bathurst Rd Woodford

Over the past few weeks members of the Society and the general public have reported to us what appears to be a substantial area of land cleared at Woodford. The works are recent and the land appears to have been stripped of all vegetation, including trees, shrubs and grasses. The area in question is highly visible from the highway, railway and high points in Woodford.

On further investigation of Council's interactive maps, the block in question seems to be 18-20 Old Bathurst Rd Woodford. Council aerial photography shows that the block had included substantial areas undeveloped and covered with native vegetation. The undeveloped previously vegetated parts of the lot are zoned either E3 and E2. The clearing appears to have extended into the E2 zone which contains scheduled vegetation 5A Blue Mountains Heath and Scrub. The E2 part of the land is also within the Sydney drinking water catchment. As the clearing is substantial, with vegetation removed down to bare earth, there is a real risk of soil erosion and impacts on water quality, as well as the loss of fauna and flora habitat and visual amenity.

We also understand that the Native Vegetation Act applies in the Blue Mountains and approval is required under the Native Vegetation Act for clearing of native vegetation on land zoned E2, if the clearing is not approved under a development application.

The Society searched the Council's Register of Development Applications but cannot find any development application lodged or approved relevant to the property in question. The removal of vegetation also appears to well exceed the allowable clearing under the 10/50 Vegetation Clearing Code of Practice for bushfire mitigation.

The Society requests that you investigate this as a matter of urgency and inform us of the outcomes. If the clearing has been undertaken without approval and is in fact illegal, we would ask what penalties Council will be applying and what remediation will the Council be seeking from the owner.

The Society is very disturbed by reports of this nature. We urge Council to enforce requirements of both the Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan 2015 and any other relevant legislation, if the clearing is illegal. Blue Mountains residents must feel confident that land owners cannot get away with disregarding laws aimed at protecting the natural environment.

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society will also be referring this matter to the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage for investigation under the Native Vegetation Act.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "T. Cameron".

Tara Cameron
Senior Vice President
Blue Mountains Conservation Society
mobile 0419 824 974 or email taracameron4@gmail.com

cc. Mayor Mark Greenhill,
Ward 2 Councillors Hollywood, Bennett, Van der Kley
MS Trish Doyle, Member for the Blue Mountains