



Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

10 September 2018

Dr Rosemary Dillon
General Manager
Blue Mountains City Council
Locked Bag 1005
Katoomba NSW 2780
via email: council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Dear Dr Dillon

Submission Draft Water Sensitive Blue Mountains Strategic Plan

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community based volunteer organisation with over 800 members. The goal of the Society is to promote the conservation of the environment in the Greater Blue Mountains. The Society would like to make a submission in relation to the Draft Water Sensitive Blue Mountains Strategic Plan.

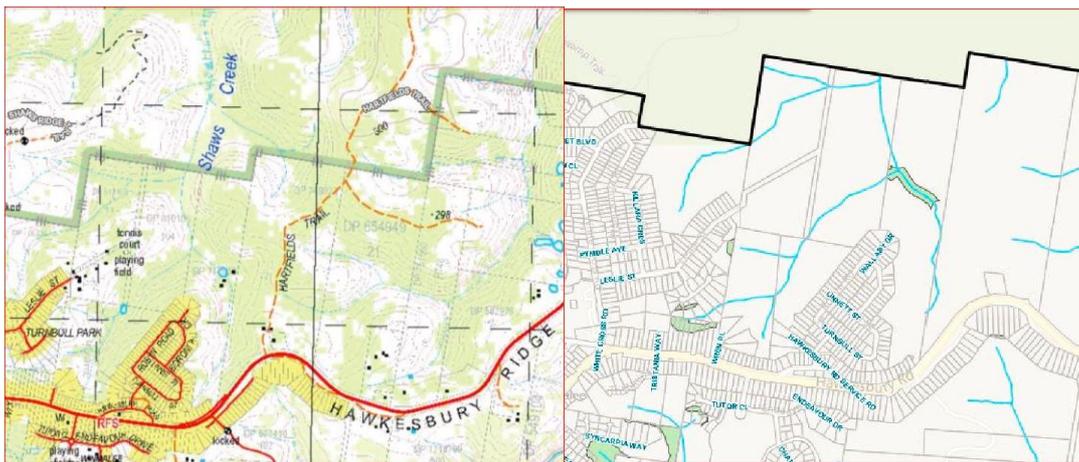
The Society strongly supports the philosophy and detail of the Draft Plan and commends Council for investing in the resources to prepare the Plan. In particular, the Society supports the following:

- The emphasis on Aboriginal cultural values as reflected in Theme 1: Caring for Ngurra (Country);
- Theme 2: Integrated Water Cycle Management. The statement on p.38 ("This siloed approach leads to unforeseen impacts on other aspects of the water cycle or missed opportunities to collaborate for better outcomes") reflects the experience of the Society in some water management projects it has been involved in. The Society also strongly supports the solution outlined on p.39, including the finding that there is a need for "... people from different disciplines, organisations and sections within Council to work together to deliver water management projects." The Society also supports Council's active involvement of the broader community in the program;
- Theme 3: Objectives and targets (Theme 3). The Society believes it is essential that the Water Sensitive Blue Mountains Strategic Plan is integrated and embedded into Council's strategic planning documents and all interrelated strategic and operational plans. The Society supports Council leading by example and ensuring all council works meet WSUD requirements as designated in Council's DCP and that Council incorporates WSUD into capital works project briefs;
- Theme 4: Effective Partnerships. The Society is a strong supporter of community partnerships and involvement in local environmental management and projects and strongly supports Key Action 5 "Continue to work with conservation volunteers to develop catchment-based action plans";

- Theme 7: Enhanced Knowledge.
The experience of local community members, both as recipients of education about Healthy Waterways and later as supporters of the benefits of WSUD within communities, demonstrates the need for a well structured and funded education plan.

Suggested amendments

- More detail in the Action Plan. The Society supports the proposed Action Plan, however, we are concerned it is short on detail and believe further information needs to be included. The Society strongly supports the proposed appointment of a dedicated Water Sensitive Blue Mountains Officer. This should be an additional full time position within Council (i.e. not renaming of a current position).
- Shaws Creek. Shaws Creek and its catchment are located in the Lower Blue Mountains near Winmalee Shopping Centre and adjacent residential areas (see maps) but this waterway is not included in the Catchment map or waterway lists on pages 12 & 13. The waterway is shared with Hawkesbury Council. In addition to the issues identified at Appendix 1, inclusion of Shaws Creek would provide an opportunity to engage with Hawkesbury Council on a specific project.



Shaws Ck Winmalee (SixMaps)

BMCC LEP2015 Maps (approximate)

- Wild Swimming. The Society notes the reference to 'wild swimming' as an increasingly popular recreational activity and urges the BMCC development of guidelines to regulate this activity, encourage responsible safety and environmental behaviours and decrease detrimental impacts on waterways, fauna and aquatic life'.

The Society thanks Council for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours sincerely

Madi Maclean
President
Blue Mountains Conservation Society
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Addendum 1 Shaws Creek

Shaws Creek in Winmalee and Hawkesbury Heights is not mentioned in the draft plan. The map on page 12 (there is no figure number) and the water ratings on page 13 include no. 49 Blue Gum Swamp Creek but not Shaws Creek. The shading for no. 49 suggests that Shaws Creek has been erroneously included in the Blue Gum Swamp Creek catchment when in fact the two are quite separate. Blue Gum Swamp Creek is a tributary of Lynchs Creek that runs into the Nepean River in south Yarramundi. Shaws Creek has a stand-alone catchment and enters into the Nepean River upstream from Lynchs Ck and below Hawkesbury Heights.

Shaws Creek needs to be considered as part of this strategic plan because:

1. It is a lower Mountains tributary of the Nepean River that carries water, sediment and pollutants from a large built-up part of Winmalee and all of the Hawkesbury Heights residential area. Its drainage divide runs along Whitecross Road just east of the Winmalee Village Shopping Centre and extends to the Blue Mountains National Park to the north and to Hawkesbury Lookout (western side) to the east. To the south it is bounded by a long stretch of Hawkesbury Road that has unsealed road verges as do many of the side roads.
2. To our knowledge there are no (major) constraint devices regulating sediment, weeds, chemicals etc from the built-up area. For example two large drains run directly from the eastern portion of Hawkesbury Road through bushland properties to its north. Properties at 550-590 and 614-642 are directly impacted on by this drainage but there are no gross pollutant traps or any other water quality improving devices in place (except for a single silt screen that is rarely cleared). Both properties have carried largely unconstrained sediment input, poor quality road water runoff and weed propagules for many decades.

A southern tributary of Shaws Creek drains from the Winmalee Fire Station and directly through the backyards of adjoining houses between Hawkesbury Road and Turnbull Street Winmalee and has carried weeds and poor quality water onto 548 and 550-590 Hawkesbury Road since the 1980s. Again there are no control devices or water quality testing.

A commercial nursery sits on rock ledges above one eastern tributary in Hawkesbury Heights. Is drainage controlled or runoff tested there?

3. Shaws Creek catchment has considerable Aboriginal significance. Near the Nepean River are well known and very old rock shelters and engraving sites. Higher in the catchment are engravings, scared trees and more rock shelters. The catchment has not had a full systematic survey but if one was carried out it would reveal further Aboriginal values to this waterway and surrounding land.
4. Shaws Creek flows into and through the Blue Mountains National Park and sustains a number of ecosystems there including a stand of the Endangered 'River-flat Eucalypt Forest...' as well as a valley swamp (Shaw's Creek Swamp) downstream from 548 Hawkesbury Road. This low point acts as a sink for sediment and pollutants and may require management to maintain its integrity.

