

BEECROFT CHELTENHAM CIVIC TRUST INC

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BULLETIN 3

November 2014

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

Want to be better informed?

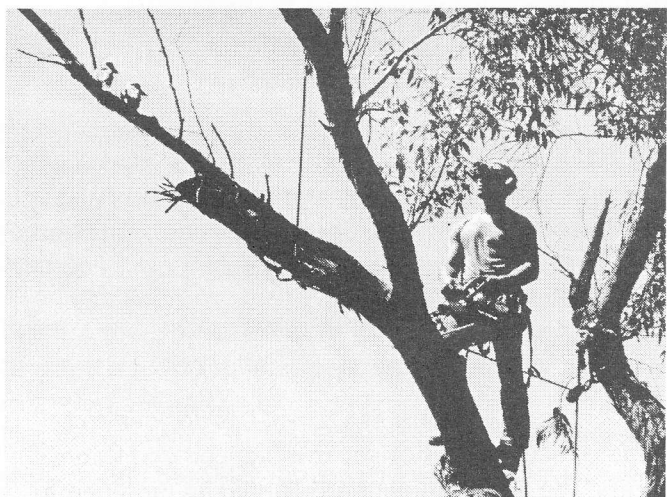
Your Trust delivers these bulletins regularly – many thanks to our dedicated team of 40 volunteer distributors! You might also check our website and weblog at www.2119.org.au. If you would like more regular monthly updates – and give your opinions on emerging issues, please join some 600+ Trust members and friends, who receive concise Trust emails. Just email comment@2119.org.au and we will keep in touch!

At the recent Beecroft Forum, Dr Cassandra Goldie told us of advice she was given by an Aboriginal Elder in Darwin when she was starting out on her career and not sure if what she was doing was right. The advice was: the only thing wrong is to do nothing. Let's all learn from this. Our community is being adversely affected by developments, 10/50, ETTT, NWRL and NorthConnex. **Don't be silent. Take action, write submissions, lobby your MPs and do something!**

In this Bulletin:

- Abuse of 10/50 Code
- Post Box at Cheltenham Station
- Consideration of Pedestrian Bridge at Beecroft
- Golden Kangaroos Moving?
- NorthConnex Public Meeting
- Beecroft Community Bank, Drama Group, Future Events
- Join the Trust

Abuse of the 10/50 Code of Practice. Beecroft and Cheltenham's Shame



What about us? Malton Rd



Welham St-power lines



Tawny Frogmouth-The Crescent

Residents and the Trust have been horrified at the rampant abuse of the 10/50 code to clear trees which have nothing to do with fire protection as it was intended. You will see in the first two photos the total disregard of these unscrupulous operators. No safety helmets, only a cap in picture 1 and a hoodie in picture 2. Note the proximity to power lines. No regard is paid to wildlife, endangered species or heritage.

These examples are only a few of the many cases we have documented where the code is being used to facilitate a development or remove trees which the owners want to do and were prohibited under the Council's Tree Protection Order and planning instruments. The Trust, residents and state MP, Greg Smith, have been actively campaigning and making submissions for an immediate moratorium so that the code can be modified to avoid these apparently unforeseen consequences in urban areas. Our concerns are being echoed throughout Sydney's leafy suburban areas.

In one case, a development application on a subdivision in Beecroft was rejected by Council to preserve critically endangered Blue Gums. There was still sufficient room to design a home and keep the trees. A challenge was to be heard by the Land and Environment Court but before this the applicant cut down two of the Blue Gums under 10/50 because they were within 10m of the neighbour's property. The neighbor did not want these trees removed but both she and the Council were powerless to stop it. Subsequently, the application was denied by the Court and the DA rejected but the trees are gone forever. In another case trees were cut down under 10/50 because they were within 10 m of a house which the owner intended to demolish. These are only two of the countless examples we have experienced. Residents have been in tears over when their neighbours clear trees but are powerless to stop it.

This code has been a fiasco. As well as allowing unscrupulous property owners to cut down trees which have no impact on bushfire safety, the code overrides tree protection orders, heritage listings and Council planning instruments. Endangered ecological communities can be cleared despite State protection. There is no evidence that clearing of trees some 350 m from fire prone areas will reduce the risk from fires and ember attack. A meeting of residents at Pennant Hills angrily condemned the government for failing to impose an immediate moratorium for urban areas once they were advised of countless examples of misuse. **Why would a Government pass such a code in the first place without realizing its implications and why won't they impose an immediate moratorium?**

The RFS believed that the legislation would be used purely by people wanting to remove trees for fire protection, but unfortunately this is not the case. There is evidence that trees may well protect properties from fire. Each case is unique. For those likely to be impacted by fire, suitable and effective fire protection measures must be undertaken and these might require the removal of trees and clearing of undergrowth. Removal of trees will not necessarily provide protection. The science is being ignored. The Trust has made a strong submission to the review of 10/50 and Greg Smith has spoken passionately in Parliament against its misuse.

Responding to Resident's Concerns - Post Box at Cheltenham Station

In our last Bulletin, we reported the sudden removal of the post box at Cheltenham Station without any notification. The Trust and residents have written to Philip Ruddock to have it restored. Since we had received no credible explanation from Australia Post, Trust President, Kent Ross, met recently with Federal MP, Philip Ruddock, and State MP, Greg Smith, to assess the situation. We had been informed that the box was removed due to the ETTT work and there was no suitable place to relocate it. We are now asking that it be replaced at the corner of Cheltenham Rd and The Crescent where there is space to make a mail zone and it is close to ramp access at the pedestrian crossing.

Pedestrian Bridge at Beecroft Rd and Copeland Rd?

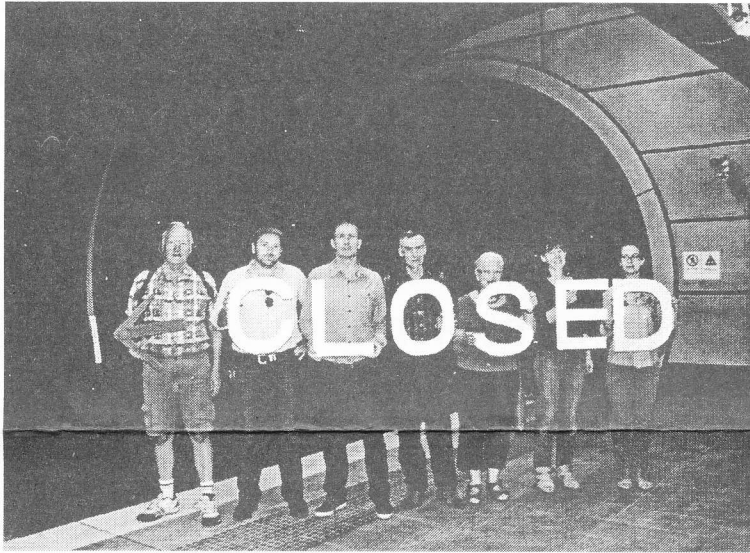
Some residents have approached the Trust about the safety of school children at this busy intersection. The Trust is aware that there has been discussions between Council and Roads and Maritime Services for an overhead pedestrian in the vicinity of Copeland and Beecroft Roads. The Trust will raise the matter with Council at a forthcoming meeting we have arranged with our Councillors and relevant Council staff.

Golden Kangaroos Moving?

Apparently the Golden Kangaroos might be moving to the Beecroft Community Centre as Council has decided to sell the old church at the corner of The Promenade and Beecroft. Disposal action has not yet commenced and Council confirmed that the sale will be a transparent and competitive process. The Community Centre would be modified to provide better access and storage for the band instruments and a parking/drop off facility would be provided on site.

Modifications to the Community Centre will come from the sale of the old church and the sum \$240,000 which the Community Centre former management committee has accumulated.

North West Rail Link (NWRL) – Closure of the Epping to Chatswood Line for 7 - 12 months



Trust Committee Makes the Point

The gifting of the publically funded Epping to Chatswood Rail Line to the private operator of the NWRL will mean its closure for up to 12 months. Some 14000 passengers use this line daily. This would require 16 buses every 15 minutes to replace each train. One bus will run from Beecroft to St Leonards via Macquarie Park **but is not planned to pick up in Cheltenham**. Cheltenham residents will have to go by train to Epping or Beecroft. Other buses go from Epping and Eastwood. Imagine what this will do to the already crowded roads. A recent article in the Northern District Times showed it could take 58 minutes at 8am compared with 17 minutes in the train. Transport Minister Berejiklian has told the Trust many times “get used to it”. She also told us the closure would be for three weekends!

The NWRL was originally proposed as an integrated rail line to provide much needed transport for the North West. The change to a Metro system, privately run by MTR that operates Hong Kong Metro, will impact the whole Sydney rail network. We have been informed that the operator will be paid on the number of trains they run, not the number of passengers. As well as commuters north of Epping having to change trains at least once or twice to reach the city and have a less frequent service, services on the Central Coast and Western lines will also be impacted. It is not too late to continue to oppose this “stupid Government decision” (as it was called by ICAC). Sources tell us that standard trains could still run through the tunnels if the Government took responsibility for any accidents. The idea of 70% of passengers standing on the 37km journey is ridiculous. The 7km tunnel from Cherrybrook to Epping is some 90m deep in sandstone yet there are no escape walkways to exit in case of an accident.

NorthConnex – Public Meeting in West Pennant Hills

NorthConnex is an unsolicited project proposed by private toll road operator, Transurban, between the M2 at West Pennant Hills and the M1 at Wahroonga. The meeting was addressed by Greens spokesperson Dr Mehreen Faruqi MLC and Dr Elizabeth Johnson from the Wahroonga CAPS group. Their addresses can be seen on youtube: **Dr Faruqi** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0kBu4MVDrc&index=2&list=UUdVdMA_7AcDMOyJmukLH7Tg and **Dr Johnson** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xtVREKPsWQ&list=UUdVdMA_7AcDMOyJmukLH7Tg&index=1

There is widespread concern for the Wahroonga stack in a suburban street within 50m of houses. The 15m stack will concentrate carcinogenic toxic emissions from the 9km tunnel and cause them to cascade down on houses. These emissions are known to cause lung and heart disease, asthma and cancer. There is no safe level for these pollutants. The air flow monitoring for this stack was not done on site but at Prospect and Lindfield! **How can this be?** This group wants the stack moved to Asquith where it can be located in bushland away from houses. The Southern stack near the M2 is likely to spread pollutants over West Pennant Hills Valley and parts of Beecroft near Pennant Hills Golf Club. Clearly the EIS underestimated the figures for pollution. The EIS states that the current time travel on

Pennant Hills Rd is 18 minutes and with the tunnel will be 20 minutes! There is no guarantee that trucks will be forced into the tunnel and local deliveries and dangerous goods will continue to use Pennant Hills Rd.

Beecroft Community Bank Project - You can help our community by pledging your support for a Beecroft Community Bank which would be run as a branch of the Bendigo Bank. The advantages of establishing this bank are that, as well as providing a complete range of banking services and local employment, it must distribute 50% of its profits to the Community. Over 10 years the Epping branch has distributed close to \$700,000 to local groups including schools, churches, sporting organisations and sponsoring community events and other projects.

At this stage a steering committee has been established. To gauge community support, we require pledges that you would either buy shares in the bank and/ or to transfer your banking to it once established. When we have sufficient pledges, we then conduct a feasibility study as the second stage. You can indicate your interest by emailing bendigo2119@gmail.com and we will get a pledge form to you.

Interested in a Drama Group for Beecroft? Some budding actors would like to form a drama group. Contact peter@snel.com.au for details.

Future Events - The Civic Trust intends holding regular meetings for the community as we have tried to do in the past. **Meet the Candidates** evening is being planned on 19 February. The date and venue will be confirmed. Clean Up Australia Day is on Sunday 1 March with the Village green as our meeting place. Our AGM will be held in April or May. Volunteers are needed to stand for election to the committee. Please give this some thought as it is an excellent way of supporting our community. Further meetings will be around August and October/November.

Why Join The Trust – your memberships and kind donations are **our only source of income**. The committee of volunteers works tirelessly representing the Community at Council and with state and federal MPs. We lobby for our community and to preserve our heritage and environment. We are frequently asked to assist residents regarding developments and other matters, all done on a voluntary basis. Your subscriptions pay for the 4 or 5 Bulletins we have printed and delivered to all households in 2119 by our volunteer deliverers. We hire halls and provide refreshments for public meetings and conduct two guided walks a year. **Help us to help you by joining.**

Join the Trust Now and Support your Community

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL/APPLICATION FORM 2015

Fees are \$20 household (two adults), \$10 individual

Surname (1)..... First name (1)

Surname (2)..... First name (2)

Address

Phone Number Mobile No.....

E-mail address

Membership fees \$ as noted below. Donation \$.....Method of payment please mark appropriate box:-

Post with cheque to PO Box 31 Beecroft 2119

Deposited in bank BSB 062 113 Commonwealth Bank Beecroft Account No 10068238.

Electric Funds Transfer EFT from your bank account via computer

BSB 062 113 Commonwealth Bank Beecroft Account Number 10068238 and use your name as reference.

So we know your details, please send a copy of this completed form to The Treasurer, PO Box 31 Beecroft 2119 OR email your name, address, phone no and email address to treasurer@2119.org.au