



The General Manager
Hornsby Shire Council

"Draft Byles Creek Planning Study"

Dear Sir

The Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust supports the recommendations of the Byles Creek Planning Study. While the study is very comprehensive the following comments explains why the Trust supports the Study.

This Study focuses on where land use controls should be in the future. A red flag for Council to recognise the future direction our precious environment should be heading in.

The Trust has witnessed a noticeable slow, but steady, decrease in biodiversity throughout the Beecroft and Cheltenham area over the past 30 years. There appears to be a comfortable mindset in parts of the community that does not recognise this imperceptibly slow degradation of our environment. There is an urgent need to stabilise the environmental degradation and hopefully reverse the long term trend. It is Council's responsibility to provide the necessary strategic controls that will guide Beecroft and Cheltenham to where it has to be in one or two generations from now. This Study is part of that strategy.

The adoption of an E4 zoning is well overdue. With increasing pressure on biodiversity, the existing R2 zoning is not providing the necessary protection for areas of the Shire where biodiversity is seriously threatened.

The Trust further notes that the use of E4 zonings is becoming more prevalent in other council areas where the protection of biodiversity has priority, including The Hills, Ku ring gai and Northern Beaches Councils. The Trust would like to see Council seriously consider adopting E4 zonings to more areas of the Shire where residential areas adjoin bushland.

The Trust must stress that the Study is not about financially impacting upon a few affected landowners, but instead it's about benefiting the majority. Residents and land owners are, after all, simply custodians of our environment.

In a broader context, Council has been cognisant of what long term generational changes it wants to occur in all our suburbs. The Trust has acknowledged and supported the various strategies that Council has recently prepared and endorsed, such as Biodiversity Conservation, Urban Forest, Climate Wise and Sustainability. Now is the time to use those various strategies to implement the next steps in the vision, including the Byles Creek Study.

In conclusion, for over a generation Council has promoted itself as the 'bushland shire'. Our bushland has always been recognised as an extremely valuable asset. In this day and age Hornsby Council with its bushland is the envy of many other councils throughout Sydney. The Trust in turn also recognised the bushland as a valuable asset that had to be preserved at all costs. Our constitution, written two generations ago in 1964, reflects that. The Trust's constitution has not changed, nor has the Trust's current views.

Yours sincerely,

Ross Walker OAM

Vice President
Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust
29 September 2021