



**BEECROFT
CHELTENHAM**
CIVIC TRUST INC
the voice of our community

The General Manager
Hornsby Shire Council

Dear Sir,

Hornsby Shire Draft Thematic History

The Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust commends Council on the publication of its draft thematic history. It has been difficult to ascertain how much material should be included in the thematic history. There is a risk that if too much is added then the purpose of the document becomes lost in too much detail. So while the document is already quite extensive the Trust makes the following observations, as opposed to criticism.

There is of course an ongoing need to collect additional information from the public. The Trust suggests further consultation with the community, perhaps with closed workshops that can focus on specific themes and specific suburbs. As a starting point, the Trust strongly recommends that the Beecroft Cheltenham History Group is consulted, if they have not been already.

The information supporting the themes appear to concentrate on selected articles obtained from material available in the public domain, such as history books and Trove. As a result the Trust feels that the thematic history has a degree of imbalance, on one hand providing detailed information on some subjects within a theme yet perhaps silent on other subjects of arguably equal influence.

An example would be a reference to nurse Jane Starkey, who is mentioned in self-guided tours on page 94. Perhaps Nurse Starkey was used because she came to prominence only recently when her former cottage at Thornleigh was demolished as part of a recent development consent. There should be better examples of former identities the author could select.

The Trust would like to see a stronger correlation between the various themes and specific suburbs. Perhaps the use of subthemes should be incorporated in the document. The LGA is large quite diverse, ranging from rural lands to high density residential.

The Trust found the reference to Sydney CBD mapping on page 95 and 96 confusing; the assumption was made that this was included as an example of what can be achieved.

There appears to be little reference to the various community based associations and their influence on history. These community associations have been influential over the years. Associations such as Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust (BCCT), Epping Civic Trust, Pennant Hills Civic Trust, Galston Progress Association, Cherrybrook Progress Association and Byles Ck Valley Union (which has been recently reformed) are good examples.

Also there have been other associations specifically created based on an issue or theme, such as the former Union of Lane Cove Valley Conservations (ULCVC) that was formed to protect the now gazetted Lane Cove National Park. The ULCVC consisted of an amalgamation of community associations that surrounded the Lane Cove Valley, including Thornleigh Bushland Society, Hornsby Bushland Society, South Turramurra Environment Protection (STEP) , BCCT, Willoughby Environment Association (WEPA) and Hunters Hill Nature Society.

The existing Beecroft and Cheltenham conservation area, including a number of individually listed items, is dependent on its own specific local themes, like all individual conservation areas. This is stated in the document. The Trust interprets the 4th objective, *To create specific local themes relevant to contemporary communities that have regard to the 36 NSW State Themes* , that it would be more beneficial if there was an explanation of how the themes actually contribute to specific localities. Perhaps, as stated above, subthemes are required to convey the full message. And the 5th objective can then *explain* why the themes or subthemes have influence.

to assist Council, attached is the Trust's earlier survey that has been sent to Council, providing a list of properties identified as having possible heritage item. The list is not exhaustive, as some properties have not been assessed. This list should be of value in the next stages of the overall Heritage Action Plan.

On page 56, bushwalking is described but there is, disappointingly, no reference to Marie Byles or her property Ahimsa at Cheltenham. Perhaps additional details are not required for this theme, but Marie was a very active bushwalker and has been credited as a key founder of Bouddi National Park. Marie was also associated with well-known walkers such as Paddy Pallin and Dot Butler.

The Trust would like to see greater emphasis placed on the proximity of high quality bushland so close to suburbia; arguably unique in the Sydney region. This occurs from Beecroft and Cheltenham in the south to Hornsby and further to the north, where one can alight from a train and enter high quality bushland within 5 minutes. This leads onto the remarkable bushcare volunteers that Council is fortunate to have. Like the RFS and other volunteer organisations, the bushcare volunteers should not be ignored.

The transport theme has not referred to the negative impact major infrastructure projects such as the M2 motorway, widening of Pennant Hills Rd and the third rail line has had on Beecroft and Cheltenham. All these 3 major State Government driven infrastructure projects have severely impacted on the quality of living in Beecroft and Cheltenham. The M2 in particular has physically divided Beecroft to the extent that the southern section of the suburb is now within Parramatta City Council. This division is slowly eroding the social and physical unity of the suburb, while the constant noise from the traffic is creating serious health problems. It has also destroyed the quiet ambience of the adjoining bushland.

The third rail line, with the increased frequency of freight trains, has also created negative impacts on the quality of living in Beecroft and Cheltenham. The NorthConnex has actually benefited Beecroft with the removal of traffic noise on Pennant Hills Rd, especially at night.

Perhaps the document should expand on the theme that covers State Government's influence on housing and transport infrastructure.

The recent rezoning of the Beecroft shopping precinct has been mentioned in the document but more detail is required on the gradual impact the zoning changes is having on the heritage character of the shopping precinct as a whole.

The Trust is available if Council wish to further discuss the thematic history.

Yours sincerely
Ross Walker OAM

Vice President
Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust
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