

STEP Inc

Community-based Environmental Conservation since 1978

14 February 2011

The Mayor,
Ku-ring-gai Council
Locked Bag 1056
Pymble NSW 2073

Dear Ian,

Re: Golden Jubilee Mountain Bike Proposal Meeting 7 February 2011

Thank you for inviting STEP to participate in the above meeting.

As you may be aware, STEP has undertaken a number of site inspections of this area, both in terms of this proposal and as part of the earlier KMC Unstructured Recreation Plan. These inspections have at various involved me, Robin Buchanan and Andrew Little. We have also met with local community leaders, at their invitation, about the impacts of the above proposal on their locality.

I am attaching a copy of a summary report written by Robin Buchanan following our own recent visit to the proposed sites of the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Golden Jubilee development. Robin is of course recognised as one of Australia's top bush restoration experts.

The STEP view of the proposal is that we generally support the so called Stage 1 proposal. If it goes ahead, we would suggest that the local community be involved in its implementation. In particular, the local community has intimated to STEP that they are willing to become involved in the longer term rehabilitation and maintenance of the degraded bushland in and around this site. This community support is invaluable if a successful rehabilitation programme is to occur. This, STEP believes, would be an important benefit of the development.

STEP does not support the Stage 2 proposal as it currently stands. While much of the bushland through which the trails are proposed is degraded, this is not uniformly the case (refer again to Robin Buchanan's report). The main concern STEP has however relates to the intensity of use associated with mountain bike trails and their likely significant long-term impacts on the biodiversity of affected natural areas, especially given stated plans to "link in" mountain bike tracks from other adjoining areas such as Garigal and Hornsby.

Our position continues to be that there are degraded land fill and other sites which could be categorized as parks or sports fields where such an intensive land use is more appropriate. Where these interface to good natural bushland then the impacts of usage need to be fully absorbed within the higher land use zone so that there is no net impact on the bushland. This would require appropriate water, soil and vegetation management and regular track maintenance which should be the responsibility of the user groups. An appropriately coordinated "Bike Care" group could well facilitate this work.

Yours sincerely

Barry Tomkinson
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