



STEP Inc

Community-based Environmental Conservation since 1978

3 May 2019

Caroline Maeshian
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Email: devmail@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

Dear Madam

DA/101/2019

Development application - Hornsby Quarry redevelopment - landform modification to create future parkland

STEP Inc is a local community-based environmental group, with a membership of over 400 in the Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai area. Our main objective is to preserve natural bushland in northern Sydney from alienation or degradation and ensuring proper management of this bushland including ensuring its role as habitat for animal species. Our group has considerable experience in environmental issues and regenerating and preserving natural bushland and native vegetation.

STEP supports this DA. We welcome three major long-term outcomes:

- a) A world class passive recreation space
- b) Increased biodiversity values on the site
- c) Better connection for people, flora and fauna with the adjoining Berowra Valley National Park.

STEP lacks the expertise to comment on many areas covered in the reports but they seem to be thorough and present a detailed analysis of the issues and high standard solutions.

STEP would like to comment briefly on the following issues:

1. Eastern wall of the diatrema

STEP agrees with the report Geological Society of Australia that the eastern face is of significant value for its science and education to Australia and internationally. Reshaping works must leave this face exposed and cleaned of fill. Signage explaining the diatrema's geological significance should be included.

2. Water, erosion and sediment control

These are complex issues on earth works of this scale. It is imperative that high water quality and normal flow regimes are maintained throughout the timing of the works so that ecosystems within the site and in the adjoining Berowra Valley are not damaged.

3. Tree and biodiversity management

We are disappointed that 0.74 ha of Blue Gum High Forest and 1.76 ha of Blackbutt Gully Forest is to be removed but, having read the Tree Survey and the Biodiversity Impact Assessment, we are somewhat reassured.

We hope that Hornsby Shire Council will reinstate these plant communities to the highest possible standards and have the following comments:

- Seed collection – STEP would rather that the collection range of was broadened from local sites to a range of sites that will better incorporate genotypes more suited for the expected climate of Hornsby Shire in one hundred years. This will provide a wider genetic base for adaptation. Trees in particular are an investment for hundreds of years. The ‘Restore and Renew’ project of the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Australian Network for Plant conservation, as well as work from Macquarie University’s Biodiversity Node are well worth consulting.
- Appropriate reinstatement of vegetation layers to reach modern day vegetation condition benchmarks of BioNet
- We do however have some concerns about these bench marks as they have been recently established and may not reflect historic vegetation communities, both structurally and species composition. Recent scientific research into Blue Gum High Forest seems to date from 1990 with the publication of ‘Taken for Granted’ by Benson and Howell. This community has been logged so many times that simplification of the community may have taken place and the fast-growing colonizer *Eucalyptus saligna* become excessively dominant. STEP would like further research into the composition of this forest in the early days of European settlement so that planting ratios (of trees in particular) are as historically correct as we can get them.
- Soil construction – we are pleased soils experts of the standard of SESL have been engaged and that there is an emphasis on appropriate soil properties throughout the soil profiles.
- STEP also congratulates Council on the reuse of habitat features such as salvaged hollows and logs

STEP looks forward to the creation of a world class recreational park with high biodiversity values.

Yours faithfully,



Jill Green
President