



STEP Inc

Community-based Environmental Conservation since 1978

General Manager
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28 October 2015

Dear Sir

Re: Draft Plan of Management - Hornsby Park, Old Mans Valley and Hornsby quarry

STEP Inc is a local community-based environmental group, with a membership of over 400 in the Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai area. Our group has considerable experience in environmental issues and regenerating and preserving natural bushland and native vegetation.

This Plan of Management is generally well thought out and of high quality but STEP would like to reinforce some aspects.

We agree that the landscape character is unique with the quarry providing a dramatic and quiet and remote landscape with high environmental and heritage values. We would like these preserved.

The diatrema is one of the most significant aspects of the site and the wall must be preserved for both its geological heritage and landscape values; but we cannot find in the plan any reference to access to the quarry face for scientific purposes, nor is there reference to provision of a viewing platform with information panels so the public can appreciate and learn about the diatrema and its place in the geological history of the Sydney area. Since the diatrema's Jurassic age places it in the realm of the dinosaurs there are wonderful opportunities and inspirations for a creative and artistic designer.

Natural values are of great importance. Any remnant vegetation must be protected and its values enhanced by bush regeneration techniques. These types of forest generally have a high natural regeneration capacity and weed removal and follow up maintenance is often sufficient to regenerate a high quality bushland. Areas that are currently weedy should not be written off as of low value as they may be able to be regenerated easily. Any planting to extend, protect or reinforce these areas must be from local provenance sources. One of the main planning considerations must be the connectivity of the bushland and natural areas internally within the planning areas and with Berowra Valley National Park.

It is pleasing to see that creeks are given great emphasis: for their natural values, water quality control, aesthetic and play values.

Roads and parking must be kept to a minimum to protect the natural values, minimise noise and make the area pedestrian and child friendly. Limited parking near the proposed oval is sufficient for the sports field and disabled. Roads should be limited to disabled access and service vehicles, other than the proposed roads near the sport field and playground.

To simply analyse this park in a regional context is simplistic. Its primary purpose should be to cater for the increase population living in units along the main transport corridors. The parks are a very short distance from Hornsby station and bus interchange but regionally many people do not live near reliable and frequent public transport and they will arrive by car. This will lead to enormous pressure for increased parking in the valley, and hence destroy its values, and also competition for parking in the nearby streets. The current provision of a regional mountain bike track is already an indication of parking issues as many people drive to the facility and Quarry Road is quickly parked out on weekends.

STEP agrees that the provision of adventure activities is in general a good idea as their development here will take pressure off nearby National Parks but a more detailed analysis of parking needs to take place as adventure activities will attract specialized groups from throughout northern Sydney and many will arrive by car. Perhaps these groups should be encouraged to arrange group transport or a shuttle bus from the station.

The provision of a single large multipurpose oval will be an important addition to the area. STEP agrees that it should be limited to activities that do not generate large numbers of spectators as this will increase demand for parking and create high volume noise that will be increased by the landform. Traffic, parking and noise would decrease the values of the park for other users. The oval should conform to the highest environment standards with water recycling and solar powered lights.

The prime recreation should therefore be informal, picnics, BBQs, walking which will attract people from the huge number of units being built in the nearby suburbs. Sufficient walking tracks that do not conflict with mountain bikes need to be developed so that a variety of users can enjoy this simple activity.

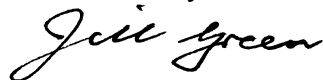
The proposed community garden must be located where any runoff and nutrients do not impact on bushland and decrease creek quality.

Heritage issues appear to be well addressed. The heritage steps, the Higgins heritage and the remnants of the quarry infrastructure should all be protected and the quarry structure repurposed for community activities.

The conservation status and significance is not adequately described. There would be many more than one amphibian and one reptile in such a diverse range of habitats. The stated tally of thirty one birds is also surprisingly low. The discussion of the native plant species is primarily limited to threatened species and communities and no indication of the range of species and structure is given. A more detailed report on both the flora and fauna is required before any development of the site.

Soil quality will also be a major problem in many areas as there are large areas of fill. STEP suggests that an expert in soils be employed to make sure the soil is the right quality for the proposed activities in different sections of the site.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jill Green". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Jill" and last name "Green" clearly distinguishable.

Jill Green
President