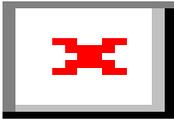


From: "Pamela Schultz" <pamela.schultz9@gmail.com>
Sent: Wed, 18 May 2022 15:29:01 +1000
To: "Council" <council@warwyn.tas.gov.au>
Subject: Submission LPS
Attachments: SUBMISSION WWC LPS 2022 P.SCHULTZ.pdf

Hello,
Please find attached my submission to the WWC Draft Local Provision Schedule 2022.
Please acknowledge receipt of this document.

yours sincerely, Pam



SUBMISSION TO THE WARATAH-WYNYARD COUNCIL DRAFT LOCAL PROVISION
SCHEDULE 2022

Author – Dr Pam Schultz

Introduction and executive summary

I, Dr Pam Schultz, have a background in social science as an anthropologist (study of humankind and all its diversity), and archaeologist (study of human history and prehistory from physical remains). Both of these disciplines were grounded in environmental scientific research. I received first class Honours for my Thesis on the impacts of agricultural activities on the Great Barrier Reef. I was then employed as a project officer with Growcom¹ to advocate for the farming victims of Severe Tropical Cyclone Larry in the Innisfail area. At the time, I was also a part-time sugar-cane farmer who, with my husband, managed mixed crops. In 2011, I completed my PhD research from CSIRO and James Cook University in the school of Environmental Science, studying why people migrate to tree and coastal areas and why do they leave.

This background provided me with a good knowledge on how people impact on the natural environment and to what extent newcomers, like sea- and tree changers, change their environment so that their impact reaches a threshold or irreversible change on the environment. I am a new resident of Wynyard and I have found that Wynyard is not dissimilar to Cairns of 30 years ago. Living in Far Nth Qld for over 30 years, I have seen the unrest and dissatisfaction on long-term residents of irresponsible planning. As well, I have witnessed, as a community member, the fights against different Council's structure plan proposals in Far Nth Qld, including applications from international magnates who have no feeling or understanding of the locality they might impact upon with their developments.

Preamble - Wynyard's historical legacy

Like so many early urban developments in Australia, the early planners of Wynyard built on flood plains and close to waterways. In fact, Wynyard was built upon the alluvial fan of the Inglis River. We are irreversibly in a Climate Change era due to the loss of its natural controls, i.e., canopy cover and biodiverse landscapes. Wynyard's urban envelope reached a tipping point when recent rainfall events of 2011 and 2016 caused damaging floods to the banks of waterways, which also impacted houses. I have personally observed that the infrastructure, such as walking tracks and rock walls, has collapsed along the Inglis River. These floods also eroded the riparian zone in many other places, and together with developments pushing out towards the river, is reducing the resilience of an already narrow river riparian width and wildlife corridors. In places, land managers have even cleared the banks and allowed cattle to pollute the river with their runoff, while urban residents have poisoned or cut down the river trees for views. Urban development in 2022 has seen further loss of climate controls with more vegetation removed and the straightening of creeks such as Port Creek and unnecessary tree felling at Camp Creek. Therefore, it is time to reflect on what is necessary to fix these problems and that will come from decisions that the Waratah/Wynyard Council (WWC) will make in the near future.

My submission will focus on the natural environment of Wynyard.

RIVERS AND WETLANDS

Long-term studies show that the health of Inglis River is in decline.² In the Forest Practices Code 2020, the present riparian zone for a Class 1 waterway (Inglis River) is 40m, for Class 2 (permanent creeks with a catchment of 100-2500sq ha) is 30m. The banks of the Inglis River are eroded and undercut. Speed

¹ The peak body representing horticulturalists in Queensland, based in Brisbane

² Source: DPIPWE 2020, Temporal and Spatial Patterns in River Health Across Tasmania, and the Influence of Environmental Factors. Pp.120

boats will add to this problem if they travel at speeds that cause waves. This would not be a problem if the urban envelope and road building were positioned to provide for an adequate riparian width for the river. However, historical development have encroached on the Inglis River's riparian areas. Adding to this, some residents have cut vegetation right to the river's edge. New residential areas at Hogg Street and Hales Street, as well as along the Old Bass Hwy, are examples of old thinking where riparian space has been compromised because of retrofitting and infrastructure necessities. These actions directly contravene the Cradle Coast Regional Land-use Strategy policies where development 'does not impinge on the natural movement and operation of waterways and wetlands.'³

Relevant Overlay Maps

I have studied the overlay maps relating to the residential zones, the natural assets code and the priority vegetation zone and I see that the proposed Ballad Ave dog park and free camping area is right in the middle of the priority vegetation zone. In addition, the fire overlay map shows possible threats to urban areas. The REM Overlay WWC is also relevant to the recommendations I have made below because there is little or no connectivity with the native vegetation of local importance and/or threatened species. To help alleviate the problems to the above, I recommend:

- Near Hales and Ballad St, the vegetation close to the river, must be left undeveloped and allowed to regenerate and provide resilience to the Inglis R. riparian area. "It is easier to protect riparian zones in reasonable to good condition than it is to remediate seriously degraded ones."⁴
- Future urban developments must leave a much wider buffer of at least 30m (class 2 stream) or 40 m (Class 1 river) to include not only wider riparian areas but also a fire break.
- Future urban development must filter stormwater runoff of their contaminants such as oil and grease from cars, garden waste, fertilisers and silt.⁵
- Retain vegetation and deep-rooted trees around flood plains – they soak up water, filter nutrients, decrease runoff velocities, capture sediment, provide bank stability and reduce the potential for dryland salinity

In the coded maps for the waterways and coastal protection areas and the flood prone hazard areas, I see the Hogg Street development is encroaching on the edge of the camp creek wetland. In addition, houses here were built too close to the creek. In 2021-2022, infill was placed on the edge of the wetland and soil dumped on riparian trees. The foreman of the development told me that houses will be built on this infill. This is totally inadvisable as firstly the infill has subsequently developed fissures from recent rain events (May 2022), and it is in the riparian zone.

In another area, adjacent to Port Creek, houses were flooded⁶, yet I see no indication of a flood prone hazard marking in the overlay. How many other areas have been omitted from the flood overlays?

There is no easy fix for the above problems, except to buy back the houses too close to the waterways that will flood in the future because of the more severe weather conditions expected due to Climate Change.

Recommendations:

- Create stronger bi-laws to stop vegetation removal, especially on riparian areas and mature trees
- Strengthen the remnant vegetation parcels that are in the zoned residential zones close to the Inglis River such as the area off Ballad Ave

³ In Appendix C 2.4 (a) on p. 2 = APPENDIX C – WWC Response to Part of C of Cradle Coast Regional Land Use Strategy

⁴ Waterways & Wetlands Works Manual 2003, No.7 Environmental Best Practice Guidelines: Managing Riparian Vegetation

⁵ Source: Accessed online 18 April 2022, URL: <https://www.youhome.gov.au>

⁶ 63B, Old Bass Highway (pers. Comm. J. Collins)

- Encourage landowners along Big Creek to monitor erosion and plant more bank- stabilising vegetation
- Educate landowners close to waterways of riparian functions and inform them of the rules and width of riparian vegetation
- Inform landowners that penalties will apply to landowner who destroyed riparian vegetation
- Set a lower speed limit for motor boats

Comment

The above will have the added value of improving water quality on all our waterways and the runoff onto our important coastal areas. Wetlands should never be built upon or drained but are useful for grazing livestock.

Wetlands

Most people would not think of wetlands or the “local swamp” important economically. However, Australia does value wetlands and we are signatory to the RAMSAR convention with 66 internationally significant sites.⁷ Without any cost to us, wetlands “regulate water quality (including availability of surface water), groundwater recharge, and can play an important role in contributing to flood regulation.

Lesser known, but no less important, wetlands help minimise erosion and filter sediment, thereby contributing to land formation and increasing resilience to storms. All these ecosystem services improve water security, including security from natural hazards and climate change adaptation. For instance, wetlands act as carbon sinks and for this reason their degradation (e.g., draining peatlands) can lead to very significant greenhouse gas emissions. Wetlands also regulate sediment transport thereby contributing to land formation and coastal zone stability” (TEEB)⁸

VEGETATION FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

The Central Coast Council aims to increase their canopy cover from 18% to 30% by 2030 (Pp4). In contrast the WWC are destructively removing trees at an alarming rate because of a ‘perceived’ high ‘risk’ to human life and urbanisation. Only one person has died from tree falls in Wynyard since 1858⁹, so the risk is not only very low, but extremely low. Trees, especially old growth trees, need to be preserved in Wynyard and any risk factors managed without destroying more trees.

Recommendations to protect existing vegetation

- Urgently compose a set of criteria for significant trees and vegetation remnants with community members
- Urgently list and map a tree and remnant vegetation registrar on public land
- Include tree lists and maps volunteered by private residents on private land
- Educate the public on the importance of old growth trees and corridors for ecosystem and wildlife sustainability
- Penalise residents who do harm to riparian zones
- Mandate a target to increase the canopy cover in our urban areas like the Central Coast Council has done.

Comment

People are a part of an ecological system, and vegetation works to freely provide the three components we cannot live without; clean water, air and soil and yet we abuse this service.

⁷ Source: Accessed online 17 May 2022, URL: <https://www.awe.gov.au/water/wetlands/australian-wetlands-database/australian-ramsar-wetlands>

⁸ www.teebweb.org

⁹ Mark A Hartley and Jessica J Chalk 1 May 2019, A review of deaths in Australia from accidental tree failures.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION & HISTORICAL PLANNING APPROVALS

Community consultation is essential to democracy, but it needs to be said that historically, people do not live sustainably within their environment.¹⁰ Therefore, consulting the community on matters involving the natural environment will not necessarily bring forth sustainable solutions. As the landscape changes around Wynyard, the long-term residents might be dissatisfied about the deteriorating environmental change, and the new residents will not know any different, because plans are grounded in the dominant system of the times. Structure plans are also subject to flaws in structure and in theory.¹¹ Moreover, some plans sit on the shelf for a long period of time and decisions made in collaboration between councils and residents become less tenable when people in the electorate keep changing, or time lags occur before anything is actually done (i.e., Hogg Street Urban Development DA 2006, Wynyard; start date 2021). Councilors are voted out, council staff changes and new people come into the district and both staff and politicians or councilors may never be called to account for promises made to their last set of constituents.¹² People will come from other places with their own habits and ideas, some will impact negatively and some positively, according to the fashion at the time. Planners need to take these theoretical statements into account when making decisions when unethical and non-sustainable plans are submitted to WWC, and ensure that their approach is ethical and sustainable.

History has shown that a considerable amount of time can elapse between an announcement of a structure plan, community consultation (if any) on that structure plan and the structure plans development approvals. For example, the Camp Creek dredging. Old planning approvals may not be contemporary with changes in community opinions or newly developed strategies and codes for sustainability.

Recommendation

- Include clauses in WWC approvals that allow councils to retrospectively re-assess past development application approvals when substantial time lags between the approval and the beginning of the project or near the end of a long-standing project

The WWC integrated Council Environment Plan (iCEP) and the Tasmanian Planning Scheme (TPS) promote sustainable living, climate change mitigation and the promotion of biodiversity but in Wynyard today, landscape and urban developments do not align with these narratives. For example, the present (2022) Hogg St and Hales St urban developments.

For this submission I have studied the environmental and sustainability plans of several other council's. For example, The Central Coast Strategy¹³ outlines their sustainable living plan and I quote:

- Develop planning permit conditions that facilitates the deliverance of Green Infrastructure outcomes.
- Establish a baseline data set to identify canopy cover and prioritise planting areas.
- Develop planting palettes that consider climate adaptability and are “fit for site”.
- Update relevant Council Plans to align with the Greening Central Coast Strategy.
- All tree removals to be replaced and guided by the planting palette

¹⁰ Milton (1996: 222) see my thesis.

¹¹ Jobs (2000)

¹² Toffler (1970: 483)

¹³ Central Coast Greening Strategy, September 2021

As well, I have studied;

- WWC iCEP plan
- the Sustainable Murchison 2040 Community Plan Regional Framework Plan and
- the Cradle Coast NRM priorities and goals and the associated response from WWC
- APPENDIX C – Response to Part of C of Cradle Coast Regional Land Use Strategy
- TasPlan (in part as it is very long and complex)

Recommendations to improve Wynyard’s livability is to:

- Preserve existing valuable pockets of vegetation such as the space where WWC has proposed free camping and dog park off Ballad Ave.
- Protect the historical and mature trees in the WWC area with a ‘protected tree registrar’
- Allow strips of green areas or wildlife zones (best put near waterways) as a prerequisite to the structure plan that will not interfere with infrastructure
- Create interurban zones/parks for wildlife that provides a corridor to connect to water
- Work with community environmental groups to restore riparian and other sensitive ecosystems and wildlife habitat
- Create water-sensitive urban designs where stormwater is filtered before entering waterways and drains.

Canopy Cover in Urban Areas

The WWC is worried about litigation from people associated with a branch or tree falling on passersby. These fears are unwarranted because death by tree failure is a rare event. As a noteworthy story, the media is partly to blame for our fears. As ignorant humans we have unwarranted fears about risks including tree failure, snake bites, shark and crocodile attacks, while mindlessly doing numerous things every day that have a much higher risk to our health. Ironically, many tree injuries and deaths in Australia are related to tree-management activities. Trees can co-exist in urban areas if the right trees are planted. Alternatively, the area can be fitted with appropriate barriers to stop entry.

Recommendations

- Educate people on the low risk of tree failure compared to other risks they undertake every day¹⁴
- Erect signs to warn people of the probability of tree failure in high winds and soaking rain
- Educate people on the ecological value of old trees with hollows
- Create fire breaks that can also act as dog runs or natural walking tracks
- Protect the riparian zones with a buffer/fire break of 20-30m with mowed grass where urban houses exist to lessen the risk of fire.

RECOMMENDATION – ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER

On the 15th June, 2020, Peter Lawrence, sent a letter to WWC, which I thoroughly endorse:

“The Waratah-Wynyard Council . . . employ an Environmental Officer to lead the development of policies, strategies, establish targets and implement action plans that address the many environmental

¹⁴ Tree failure likelihood: 1/10,000,000 in Australia and 1/20,000,000 in the UK. Compared to road accidents statistics -1,937 in one year to February 2022 and 39,755 hospitalisations in the latest data in one year to June 2019.

issues at the local council and community level. This position to be at the Senior Management Team level, equivalent to the Executive Engineer level.”

I believe that an environmental officer could be effective in assisting with the implementation of the Cradle Coast Regional Land Use Strategy 2010 – 2030 and the WWC iCEP to handle the increasing workload that the NRM and others are presently delegated. The WWC iCEP contain many actions that the present staff could not manage efficiently in its present capacity:

- An environmental officer could manage or assist with the iCEP actions: 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 2.2,3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 6.6, 10.1, 10.2, 12.3, 13.1, 13.2, 20.2, 22.6, 33.2, 35.1, 38.2, 38.9



This concludes my submission: