



## Vegetation Management Plan

Community Workshop 7th May 2014

Report Prepared by People, Place and Partnership Pty Ltd

May 2014



## Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
1.1 Purpose of this report	
1.2 Objectives of the consultation	
1.3 Format of workshop	
2. Key findings	4
3. Consideration for the project	5
3.1 Considerations for future community engagement, education and information	
3.2 Consideration of the following measures within the Vegetation Management Plan	
Appendix 1 - workshop summaries	6
Appendix 2 - agenda	9

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback from the community workshop held to discuss the Draft Vegetation Management Plan for Our River.

The community workshop was independently facilitated by Jo Kelly of People, Place and Partnership and a presentation was provided by the lead consultant Beth Medway from Eco Logical Australia Pty Ltd.

The purpose of the meeting was to provide the community with an overview of the process involved in developing a Vegetation Management Plan for Our River and to gain initial feedback from interested community members on the draft materials presented at the workshop.

### 1.2 Objectives of the consultation

The aim of the consultation session was to:

- provide an update to the community on Council activities regarding the Our River project.
- raise awareness of the process for on ground implementation of activities eg funding/ resourcing, grants, government approvals
- provide the community an opportunity to give feedback on the draft Vegetation Management Plan and the proposed actions and priorities in the context of things like cost, environmental benefit, healthy river and amenity.
- encourage the community to participate in ongoing implementation

### 1.3 Format of workshop

The community workshop was held at Penrith City Council on 7th May 2014, from 6pm to 8pm. The workshop was promoted via Council newsletter, Council's Facebook Page and community members that participated in the Our River Masterplan project were directly invited to attend the meeting. A total of 32 people participated in the session.

The workshop followed the following broad format:

- Welcome and introduction from Michael Jackson, Penrith City Council
- Overview of the session from Jo Kelly, People, Place and Partnership Pty Ltd
- Presentation of the project from Beth Medway, Eco Logical Australia Pty Ltd
- Feedback session – detailed discussion and feedback strategy by strategy, guided by a series of 3 key topics (key management issues, prioritised actions, proposed vegetation management)
- Michael Jackson from Penrith City Council provided a thank you and clarification of next steps.

Appendix 1 captures the community feedback recorded during the workshop. The full agenda for the session is provided at Appendix 2. The list of participants represented at the workshop is provided at Appendix 3.

## 2. Key findings

The Draft Vegetation Management Plan was generally received well by community members at the workshop.

### **Participants were generally in favour of the key ideas presented:**

- with specific comments that included:
  - *'is a good plan'*
  - *'generally agree'*
  - *'reasonable approach'*
  - *'looks ok'*
- generally happy with the treatment of Tench Reserve, Regatta Park and the Weir.

### **Participants pointed out various concerns with the proposals that included:**

- that Casuarinas were not mentioned as a tree to be removed within any of the proposed management actions.
- concerned about the removal of 'exotic' trees - what are they? why are they being removed? what effect will removal have on micro-environment and other established habitats?
- that there were many species identified within the planting schedules that the community did not understand what the proposed new plantings would be.
- that the plan must not only be considered to benefit the local adjoining residents of the Our River area but that it is recognised as a plan for the whole community to benefit from long term management decisions.

### **Highest priority should be given to:**

- removal of weeds and rubbish throughout the entire corridor with the community not indicating a specific priority area.
- ensuring maintenance and litter management are effective.
- maintaining areas where weeds have been removed and vegetation planted.
- pruning branches along River Road to improve filtered views.
- working closely with users (Leonay Golf Course, Panthers, sporting groups) of the Our River area to ensure that their individual actions are not impacting on litter and weed management ie weed control on their land and vegetation filtration to catch herbicides/fertilisers etc.

### 3. Considerations for the project

The following key points emerged from the feedback received and are to be considered in the development of the Vegetation Management Plan

#### 3.1 Future community engagement, education and information

- Including photo examples of the most typical species found within the Our River area that includes: natives, exotics and weeds. Specifically providing details of species that are well represented within the Our River area.
- Including more information about the history of vegetation in the VMP with evidence showing how vegetation looked along the river since European settlement and what it may have been before. This could help give more perspective to the view by some, that it was 'always' a grassy bank and that Casuarinas are not part of the natural river landscape. Best practice principles for vegetation management need to be clearly stated at the start of the Vegetation Management Plan.
- Further educate the community particularly regarding Casuarinas. The community expressed a strong desire for the removal and active pruning of the Casuarinas as a high priority. Further education is required regarding the impact that removal of Casuarinas would have (for example on bank stability, weed control etc) and other available options such as retention of the root bole for bank stability and an understanding around the parameters required to maintain healthy trees eg: removal of up to 30% of the canopy further exploring if Casuarinas were proposed to be removed, what would happen with the root bole for example, should it be retained in the soil for bank stability if trees are removed? A member of the community indicated that they had investigated this option and requested that Council explore further.
- Educate and involve the community in vegetation management via Bushcare, special events days, forums and reading material. Include practical advice on the staging and sequencing process to achieve the best outcomes.
- Develop an engagement program to generate interest in Bushcare. During the workshop suggestions were given that included:
  - ensuring that Bushcare activities are offered Mon - Fri as well as on a weekend.
  - consideration of a 'community working bee' style approach, where local schools, sporting groups, businesses that are high users of the Our River area are invited to participate in a community Bushcare working day.
  - recognition that there may be more appetite for one off Bushcare days focused on the river, then a regular and frequent program.

#### 3.2 Measures for incorporation within the Draft Vegetation Management Plan

- Weed removal and revegetation/regeneration should be done progressively in patches to maintain habitat and bank stability.
- Pruning trees is preferable to removing them. Some of the community expressed the desire to have an opportunity to discuss with an arborist which branches should be pruned to get filtered views.
- Priority should be given to removing exotic trees rather than natives if it is to improve views.
- If some trees (native or exotic) need to be removed to improve views then the loss of these must be offset by other native planting first and waiting for new planting to attain some maturity.
- No exotic trees should be planted in the corridor. Some of the community like exotic trees for their visual and cultural amenity. If exotics are planted consideration should be given to their location with respect to the practical management of re-growth and seed dispersal to minimise spread of invasive species.
- Local provenance species should be used for revegetation.

## Appendix 1- workshop summaries

### Community input for proposed strategy 1 - 3

Key management issues	Prioritised actions	Proposed vegetation management
<p><b>Treatment Zone 1</b> Filtered views (parkland)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• looks ok to me get rid of exotic trees, gradually if needed depending on their environmental impact</li> <li>• Tench Reserve is good</li> <li>• possible fence reeds/bullrushes to protect from cats/foxes</li> <li>• o/s for recreation with views</li> <li>• access</li> <li>• agree</li> </ul>		
Key management issues	Prioritised actions	Proposed vegetation management
<p><b>Treatment Zone 2</b> Filtered views (remote footpaths)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• happy for removal of exotic trees, gradually if needed depending on their environmental impact</li> <li>• good</li> <li>• possible for bike path, Jamison - Nepean Ave separate for pedestrians or designate 'shared path'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• please don't listen to the uneducated, blinkered, arrogant and ignorant snobs who want a blanket wiping out of soil - stabilising trees, there has already been mass erosion in only 200 years</li> </ul>	
Key management issues	Prioritised actions	Proposed vegetation management
<p><b>Treatment Zone 3</b> Filtered views (residential areas)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good ideas as well</li> <li>• could water gums and indigenous bottlebrush be added to the planting list, plus Cedars White Gums and Red Cedars</li> <li>• Remove Africa Acacia</li> <li>• good plan</li> <li>• what have been flood levels in last 30 years (i.e no bank washed away)</li> <li>• general comment, weeds in river</li> <li>• maintenance for sustainable solution</li> <li>• 70s, filling to extend top of banks</li> <li>• Casuarinas falling in floods</li> <li>• There is no mention of no removal of Casuarinas within this strategy</li> <li>• nature of Casuarinas needles</li> <li>• care to not disfigure trees by pruning (i.e in forefront of views)</li> <li>• well established exotic trees, Question which trees are exotic?</li> <li>• why remove exotic? (they provide shade and habitat too) what if we like them</li> <li>• council said they would only plant new trees along boundary lines, but they haven't done this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more full-time bush regenerators need to be employed by council two is absurd</li> <li>• more action needed by high impact organisations such as Leonay Golf Course and Panthers i.e more weed control on their land and vegetation filtration to catch herbicides/fertilisers etc</li> <li>• disagree re-selectively prune casuarinas as lowest priority</li> <li>• would like to know which exotic trees will be removed like the jacarandas</li> <li>• concerned re: how long it takes a Eucalyptus to grow before Casuarina's could be removed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• generally supportive</li> <li>• dislike scruffy looking native groundcovers (grasses)</li> <li>• can groundcovers be neater species/more spreading</li> </ul>

### Community input for proposed strategy 4 - 7

	Key management issues	Prioritised actions	Proposed vegetation management
<b>Strategy 4</b> Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are natural stones/boulders being used for retaining walls?, this would provide habitat and still be attractive</li> <li>this should be key destinations</li> <li>ok, good</li> <li>no comment/agree</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>looks ok</li> <li>disagree with removal of exotic trees (a tree's a tree)</li> <li>high action should be maintenance and bins</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>there should be some large shade trees</li> </ul>
	Key management issues	Prioritised actions	Proposed vegetation management
<b>Strategy 5</b> Key destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weir Reserve, grass bank slide, wear and tear, any issues?</li> <li>cars in Cassola Place, bollard missing path for fishing, not good</li> <li>Regatta Park, good</li> <li>views/bank is stabilised</li> <li>bamboo should go</li> <li>arrange is cooing too many different typed/situations (Regatta Park, casuarinas block views but bank is engineered, ks comment)</li> <li>access to water</li> <li>generally agree</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lower priority</li> <li>don't remove all the exotics</li> <li>we should be opening up views to the whole river</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>if people are going to fish should there be woody debris</li> <li>agree re: remnant native vegetation to be in beds</li> <li>consider maintenance of areas of vegetation (clumped/beds, not scattered)</li> </ul>
	Key management issues	Prioritised actions	Proposed vegetation management
<b>Strategy 6</b> Reinforce native vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pretty good</li> <li>exotic, are they all bad?</li> <li>excluding peach tree there are only two areas identified, are there opportunities for more?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>important to re-vegetate for bank stability</li> <li>interpretation/education should be a higher priority so people understand the issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not sure if two small areas would be sustainable, why not focus this on areas upstream or downstream that adjoin national park</li> <li>concern re; location of block of native vegetation adjacent to M4 bridge/boat ramp</li> <li>conflict with recreation this area plus proposed boat ramp extension</li> <li>generally agree with approach to vegetation management</li> </ul>
	Key management issues	Prioritised actions	Proposed vegetation management
<b>Strategy 7</b> Water edge access points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>probably need woody debris nearby</li> <li>need to do weed control from the river via boats</li> <li>reasonable approach</li> <li>views</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>highest access, safety</li> </ul>	

## Further comments received during the workshop session

### Other Comments

#### Waste issues

- more patrolling and prosecutions of litter bugs and pollution
- rubbish under old Victoria Bridge
- put recycled bins into the Our River area

#### Volunteers

- give rate discounts for volunteer bush care groups
- ensure an Bushcare program is considered as a priority

#### Education

- houses facing river should be regularly letterbox dropped to educate them about erosion
- school groups to get involved
- need 3D model
- council staff need training and need to care

#### Vegetation

- new tree planting by council, residents would like to know why, when council said new trees along River Rd would be planted to align with property boundaries, they have been planted at 3-5m intervals
- when pruning by council, invite residents to advise which branches to prune
- would like to identify the trees at the bottom of Francis Street steps, do not think these are native but it's a beautiful location and trees are lovely

#### Maintenance / improvements

- fencing should be installed to protect highly sensitive areas (I discovered a wombat hole near Leonay a while ago)
- Huntington Hall, vegetation coming out of property
- reserve is well maintained, should continue
- stabilise banks

#### Questions

- log cabin - what is happening?

#### Other

- nothing obvious



## Appendix 2 - agenda



People Place and Partnership  
making a difference

### Our River Vegetation Management Plan and Review of Plans of Management

Community Workshop Session 1  
Date – Wed 7th May 6 to 8pm

#### AGENDA

##### OVERVIEW OF SESSION

6:00pm (2mins)	Welcome	PCC
6:02pm (5mins)	Overview of the workshop and introductions	Jo Kelly
6:07pm (20mins)	Presentation	Beth Medway
6:27pm (60mins)	Q&A process	All
7:27pm (30mins)	Feedback and facilitated session with group	Jo Kelly
7:57pm (3mins)	Close, next steps, thank you	PCC