

Mambo Wetlands Community Group

Mambo wetland threat – what you can do

The immediate threat is to the 5.6 hectare parcel of land off Port Stephens Drive sold in June 2016 by the State Government to a private developer, for \$250,000.

Efforts to date have focussed on a buy back but the State Government has refused so far – effectively passing the buck to Council.

The new owner has now submitted a development application (DA 2017/620) to Council for a dual occupancy (two dwellings on one lot) – to be located in the middle of the lot off a long access road opposite Muller St. It would involve clearing of a significant area of mature woodland which is koala habitat and has many other environmental values. This is a **Threatened Species Development**.

If the DA was granted, the value of the site would increase significantly, as would the purchase price for any State government or Council buyback.

The land is zoned E2 – environmental protection, which unfortunately allows for dual occupancy and dwellings, with consent. However, there are many good arguments which Council could accept in order to refuse the DA.

The immediate need is for as many submissions as possible to Council before 27 October, objecting to the DA. Once those are in, we can go back to building pressure on the State government for a buy-back.

There are two ways of making a submission. In order of greatest effectiveness, they are:

- A **customised and personalised submission**, addressing the various planning and environmental criteria against which the DA will be assessed – see separate ‘**Key submission points**’ paper. This is the best option – it can be as long or short as you like.
- Signing the separate ‘**proforma**’ **objection letter**. While easier, this will have less effect than a customised submission. But if it is all you can manage it will still help – Council weighs the number of objections as well as their quality and detail.

Various local groups will be making detailed submissions and you may want to wait to see one of those and/or help draw them up – if so please make contact via Kathy Brown 0422 261 057.

Submissions should be sent either by email to council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au or by post to Council at PO Box 42, Raymond Terrace, NSW, 2324. They should prominently include **DA 16 - 2017 - 620 – 1 – Objection**. We are also asking everyone to sign a petition to Council opposing the DA.

The details of the DA are on Council’s website at

<http://datracker.portstephens.nsw.gov.au/Application/ApplicationDetails/016-2017-00000620-001/>

Under ‘Documents’ you will find plans and elevations, a *Statement of Environmental Effects (SoEE)*, a *Flora and Fauna Assessment* and a *Bushfire Assessment*. Beware hitting print as these are large documents. Paper copies are available until 27 October at the Tomaree Library (and Raymond Terrace Council chambers) where you can also view the documents on CD.

Council has already committed to bringing this DA to a Council meeting for decision, but maybe not until 2018, as they will have to do their own assessment and take into account submissions not only from the public but also from other agencies. While it is appropriate to lobby Councillors, and they can express their opinion, they cannot commit in advance to voting for refusal, as doing so would disqualify them from taking part in the decision.