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29 April 2021

Mr Viv May
Administrator
Wingecarribee Shire Council
P.O. Box 141
Moss Vale, NSW 2577

Via email: mail@wsc.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr May,

FRENSHAM SCHOOL DA 20/0747 STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

We ask that the Frensham DA for Eco Cabins be referred to the consultant reviewing the planning processes at WSC.

This DA raises the question as to how the Council's environmental checks and balances could be so inadequate that a DA on such "High-Value" wildlife habitat be recommended for approval by the Planning staff? The development would result in the removal of critical habitat at a time of massive habitat loss throughout the State and the decimation of over a billion native animals. Council's recent declaration of a Climate Emergency adds even more weight to the call for a deferral of a decision on the DA - of the 515 trees on the proposed site, 249 are to be removed. How could the planners at Council have not referred this DA to Council's environment experts before making a recommendation for approval? This highlights the need for proper procedures to ensure that the planning department of Council make such referrals to the environment division.

The Council Frensham Biodiversity report includes the following:

1. The revised Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) submitted identifies 26 native birds, one amphibian, one reptile and one mammal seen and / or heard on site, and observation of Common Wombat (Vombatus ursinus) scat on site.

2. The Common Wombat is not an endangered species,

This summary is a SHAM and misleading!

How can that be accepted as a "professional environmental" assessment of the fauna count of a site?

The WSC has a recorded sighting of a platypus in Mittagong in the Nattai Creek on your own website. From WSC website...

> The Southern Highlands Platypus Conservation Project aims to improve this situation by establishing a comprehensive, community-based survey and monitoring program and using the data to assist decision-makers and ensure the Shire has a healthy, thriving platypus population in one hundred years' time.

Species photographed or sighted in Lower Holt.:

- One Young and one old platypus confirmed with photo by Frensham student and seen by Geoff Marsh
- 14 Bear-Nosed Wombats
- Swamp Wallaby
- Sugar Gliders
- Ring-tailed possums
- Brush tail possums
- Native Mice
- Tree-Creepers
- Native Water Rats
- Whip birds
- Silver eyes
- Pink-breasted robin
- Banjo Frogs
- Mexican Walking stick insects Flying foxes
- Butterflies
- Eagles
- Native Bees
- Cockatoos
- Satin Bower Birds
- Butcher Birds
- Tawny Frog Mouths
- Book Book Owls
- Basa Hawks
- Red-goth Hawks
- Variety of ducks
- Water Hens
- Purple Swarm Hens
- Kookaburras
- White faced herons
- Several parrot species
- Eastern spine bill
- Water Dragons
- Copper head snakes
- Blue Tongues
- Golden Back Lizards
- Amongst others...

"The Common Wombat is not an endangered species" says the Ecology Report

The wombats are dismissed as insignificant. These wombats have been rescued and cared for by Frensham students and released in this area as a safe refuge. Now they are written off as not "endangered" and can be disposed of with a stroke of a pen.

Wombats are no longer called the common wombat they are officially called the Bear- Nose wombat. Wildlife officials fear the species will be gone within 50 years

Wombats are not common and are now fragmented over much of their previous range. Mange, roadkill and developers burying them alive with their bulldozers pose an existential threat to the species

Council has allowed this tragedy to be repeated time and time again. Wombats become highly stressed if they lose their home and end up in dangerous places for themselves amongst motor vehicle traffic

This proposed development is directly over the ancestral burrow thoroughfare which means Frensham would be accountable for dispersing the wombats into the dangerous urban sprawl. We all know that the surviving wombats end up in the wrong places if their burrows have been impacted. Consequently Frensham wombats would end up on Peyton Street in the hockey field and possibly over range Road and Colo Street intersection and then disperse into the suburbs which is disastrous for them and dangerous for traffic.

Also if this site destruction is approved the wombats will continue to try to dig and re-claim their home and will then be considered a pest on the Lower Holt as it is rendered nothing more than a development site.

Wombats would never have been released in Frensham if these development plans were known. Frensham has deliberately excluded the environmental groups working with the school in these development plans.

The proposal to remove 250 trees (some with hollows crucial to some 140 bird species for nesting) would only further reduce Lower Holt into an extended development site rather than a rare remaining nature reserve. This site is a truly remnant riparian zone because it now ends at Colo Street. The Maltings was completely denuded a few months ago after being a significant remnant zone that welcomed the flying fox and native water rat ... as well as many small birds and mammals reptiles. For decades now there's been no ancestral wombat burrows at the Maltings. They've all been bulldozed in which makes it even more imperative to protect the Lower Holt area.

If you ask people why they like living in the Southern Highlands, they will cite the environment amongst one of their main reasons. The council, as the custodian of the environment has a moral and ethical obligation to future generations to protect these important habitats.



Some of the animals photographed in Lower Holt

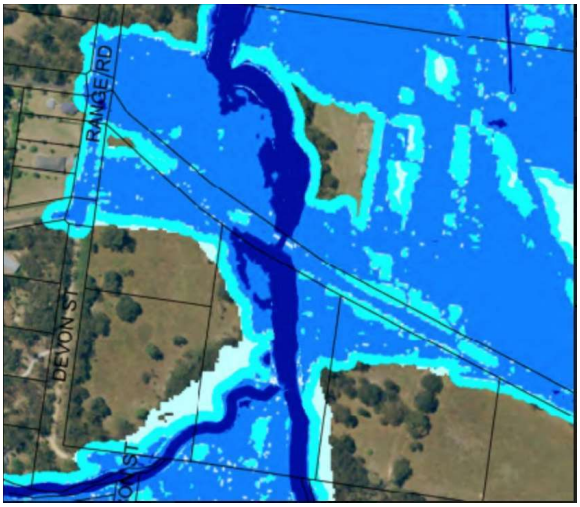


Some of the birds photographed in Lower Holt

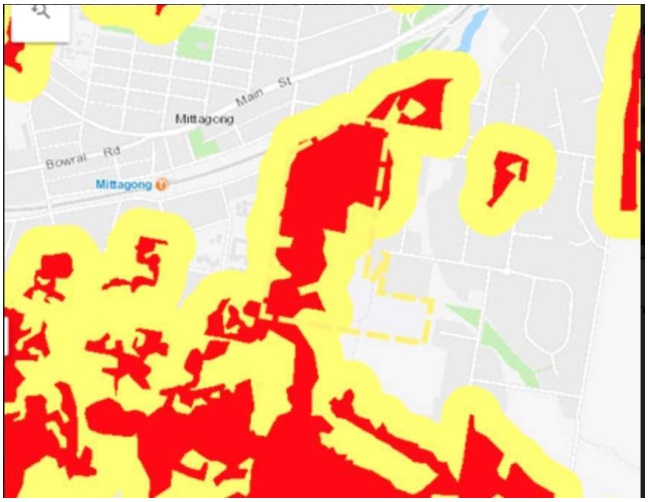


Frensham Girls with the wombats in question

The following planning maps indicate the status of the site regarding flooding and bushfire zoning:



Flood Zone



Bushfire Zone

We thank you for your time in reviewing our concerns and look forward to a response.

We can be contacted via email at: Derek White whitederekd@gmail.com and Clive West savwest@bigpond.com .

Yours sincerely,

Co-signed:

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(Derek White, Chair, WinZero)	**(Clive West, Deputy Chair, WinZero)**

Cc Ms Elizabeth Stuart, Chair, Board of Governors for Frensham Schools