



## The Palm Beach & Whale Beach Association Inc.

[www.pbwba.org.au](http://www.pbwba.org.au) | PO Box 2 Palm Beach NSW 2108

26 June 2021

“Wakehurst Parkway Flood Mitigation”

Northern Beaches Council

Council Chambers

DEE WHY 2099

### WAKEHURST PARKWAY FLOOD MITIGATION

The Palm Beach & Whale Beach Association (PB&WBA) is a community-based group, with a membership of approximately 300 representing the interests of both owners and tenants resident in Palm Beach and Whale Beach, as well as local businesses.. It is grateful for the opportunity to put forward its views on the options being considered by the Council for flood mitigation on Wakehurst Parkway North.

The alternative proposals for flood mitigation along Wakehurst Parkway North are well informed by the comprehensive and detailed report from Royal HaskoningDHV.

### FLOOD MITIGATION OPTIONS

We take the following positive reassurances from the report: -

1. There is no point in considering options which do not entail removal of overbank sediment from Middle Creek, because this would be a failure to remove one of the causes of the flooding on the Parkway. The failure to remove the sediment could also lead to further sedimentation in the future. In addition, reducing the frequency of flooding from 6-7 times a year to four or two times per annum does not provide an adequate solution to the problem and is not value for money. This would remove from consideration Options B1, B2, B5 and B7 in relation the Bends Area of the Parkway.
2. Removal of the overbank sediment will provide an opportunity for replanting with indigenous native plants whilst at the same time resulting in the removal of a significant population of non-indigenous weeds, such as privet and lantana.
3. A method is recommended for the preservation of significant trees, such as those providing nesting holes and very old Livistona palms. Social media talk of the removal of 2,000 trees does not seem to be justified by the proposals in the report.

4. The report believes that safe operating methods will significantly reduce any risk to endangered fauna and flora in the Bends area to an acceptable level. The report concludes that there is no such risk in the Oxford Falls area.
5. The S1 Option at the Sports Complex would only be required if the implementation of measures at the Bends and Oxford Falls produces increased downstream flooding. At present flooding at the Sports Complex is a once in two years event.

The report recommends adoption of Option B3 for the Bends area (the most frequently flooded area on the Parkway) plus O1 for the Oxford Falls area because this will reduce the flood risk to one per annum, for a total cost of \$13.3 million. This combination of options is described as the best performing combination, a statement which is regrettably not explained.

We recommend that the Council should adopt Options B4 for the Bends Area and O2 for Oxford Falls because this doubles the flood mitigation effect from once every year to once every two years, for an increase in cost of less than 16%, to \$15.4 million. Option B4 causes no greater traffic disruption or environmental impact than Option B3. We believe this combination is better value and offers greater security to motorists and residents. In addition, Option B4 includes a separate cycleway which will improve safety for cyclists and motorists and improve traffic flow.

#### FLOOD PREVENTION

No option of complete flood mitigation was considered by Royal Haskoning. For completeness and to allow for fully informed decision-making, this should have been part of their remit and the option should be explored.

#### EMERGENCY ACCESS

The northern end of the peninsula has a particular sensitivity to closures of the Wakehurst Parkway. Our remote location at the northern tip of NBC involves greatest travelling distance to Northern Beaches Hospital – a distance that can ill-afford extension due to detours when racing the clock for emergency treatment. As such, we raise the specific matter of emergency access, in the hope that the engineering design can somehow accommodate this to the greatest extent possible.

Whatever solution is chosen for improving the road, we imagine this would involve a raised shoulder to be ordinarily used as a footpath. The consideration we raise is whether this raised shoulder could be designed in a way that can accommodate emergency “contraflow” access for emergency vehicles only. The idea is that while a flood event might close the road to general traffic for 48 hours, emergency access might only be disrupted for a fraction of this 48 hours.

#### ROAD WIDENING

The report mentions the “high volume of traffic” on the Parkway but a consideration of widening the road to four lanes was obviously beyond their remit. Nevertheless we would like to repeat our recommendation in our BeachesLink submission that widening the road to two lanes in each direction must be considered as part of the BeachesLink construction because the Link will produce even higher levels of traffic on Wakehurst Parkway and a four-lane road is less likely to be blocked by accidents (of which there have been 29 in the period 2013-2017 per the Royal Haskoning report). As with the emergency lane recommendation, the reasons for this recommendation are greater

security of access to the Hospital for emergency cases, greater safety for motorists and a better and more efficient traffic flow, with less delay, particularly during peak hours.

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Thank you for the opportunity to put forward our views.

A/Prof Richard West

President

Palm Beach & Whale Beach Association