

March 9 2015

To:

The Hon Luke Foley. MLC Leader of the Opposition Shadow Minister for the Environment.
and
Fiona Phillips Labor Candidate for South Coast

Dear Luke and Fiona

Conservation of Lake Wollumboola and associated Catchment.

March 9 2015

To:

The Hon Pru Goward MP Minister for Planning and Minister for Women,

The Hon Rob Stokes MP Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage
Assistant Minister for Planning,

The Hon. Shelley Hancock MP Member for South Coast,

Dear Ministers Goward and Stokes and Shelley

Conservation of Lake Wollumboola and associated Catchment.

March 9 2015

To:

The Hon Dr Mehreen Faruqi MLC
Greens Spokesperson for the Environment.
And
Amanda Findley
Greens Candidate for South Coast

Dear Mehreen and Amanda

Conservation of Lake Wollumboola and associated Catchment.

BirdLife Shoalhaven is a branch of BirdLife Australia, an independent, not-for-profit organization and Australia's largest bird conservation organisation. Our branch is approaching the state Ministers responsible, local member and all candidates for the forthcoming state election to express our most serious concern with a local 'Planning Proposal' affecting Lake Wollumboola and the associated catchment and seek your commitment to the recommendations we have outlined below.

The 'Halloran Trust Planning Proposal' for the Culburra area, which proposes development in the catchment of Lake Wollumboola has the capacity to destroy Lake catchment and ecology. Lake

Wollumboola is a formally declared Australian “Important Bird Area” under BirdLife’s international conventions and a critical part of the Jervis Bay National Park environment and heritage.

The Planning Proposal includes:

- Residential, industrial and recreational zoning in the Lake catchment, to allow a golf course at Long Bow Point.
- largescale, not “limited” urban development in the Crookhaven catchment and
- proposals for gifting land to Jervis Bay National Park.

Given the threat from proposed development, BirdLife Shoalhaven is seeking your commitment to the following Policy for Lake Wollumboola and its catchment for the 2015 election

- **Acquisition of Halloran Trust lands in the Lake Wollumboola catchment including Long Bow Point and surrounds for dedication to Jervis Bay National Park, to conserve the internationally significant natural values and Aboriginal cultural heritage of the Lake and catchment.**
- **Finalising both National Park dedication and rezoning issues as part of the Halloran Trust Planning Proposal process, including placing a moratorium on further development applications for the Lake and Crookhaven River catchments, until the planning process is completed.**
- **Ensuring that proposed development expansion in the Crookhaven River catchment is “limited” in accordance with the South Coast Regional Strategy to sites assessed as capable of supporting ecologically sustainable development. (eg cleared and disturbed areas.)**
- **Subjecting the Halloran Trust Planning Proposal process to the key, accepted principles of genuine community engagement and public comment.**
- **Progressing without further delay the listing of Lake Wollumboola as a wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention.**

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The Lake is known to support at least 20,000 birds at one time, with over 100 bird species recorded. This exceptional bird diversity is recognised in the Lake’s listing in trans-national Migratory bird agreements as important habitat along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway and in the listing of 34 migratory species in the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. The Endangered migratory Little Tern and native Endangered Pied Oyster Catcher nest on the sand bar. At least 17 bird species are listed under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act. The BirdLife International declaration of Lake Wollumboola as a globally Important Bird Area recognizes it as habitat for at least 1% of the world population of Black Swan and Chestnut Teal species. The Lake catchment is also important habitat for Threatened bird species such as the Glossy Black Cockatoo and the Powerful Owl. The Lake’s values are recognised by inclusion of the Lake itself and the south west catchment in Jervis Bay National Park.

It is of considerable concern to BirdLife Shoalhaven that principles of ‘Catchment Management’, recognized and well-accepted in landuse, drainage basin and conservation management for decades, are contradicted in the Planning Proposal. Large parts of the Lake catchment, including Long Bow Point, remain zoned for urban development, with development applications including mixed-use urban development and a golf course, still to be decided. These applications in addition to the Planning Proposal have been pursued, despite previous refusal of urban development at Long Bow Point and expert advice of three independent inquiries adopted in the South Coast Regional Strategy that the Lake catchment was unsuitable for development and should be zoned for National Park.

Long Bow Point and the balance of the north west catchment include two creeks, wetlands and ground water which are critical in maintaining natural surface and ground water quality and flow to Lake Wollumboola. The Lake and therefore its birdlife are known to be vulnerable to nutrient and sediment pollution from urban storm water and ground water. Such pollution would cause micro-algae blooms to smother the aquatic plants on which all Lake bird life depends.

Recent research and expert advice from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) confirms the high sensitivity of Lake Wollumboola to impacts from development. The Report says,

- “Ground water is most probably a major component of freshwater inputs into the lake. Pollution of ground water represents a major risk to the lake.”
- “**we consider that the lake is vulnerable to a catastrophic state change** if key processes are disrupted by nutrient enrichment and there is significant loss of charophytes and macrophytes.” (Algae species)
- “The **Lake would never recover** resulting in loss of swans and other fauna.”
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[Source: Scanes P et al 2013 OEH Report titled “*Environmental Sensitivity of Lake Wollumboola: input into considerations of development applications at Long Bow Point, Culburra.*”]

BirdLife Shoalhaven acknowledges the Halloran Trust Planning proposal to gift lands in the Lake catchment for Jervis Bay National Park but finds this inadequate in balancing associated proposed development. It would have greater significance if Long Bow Point and surrounds were included in the offer. The area proposed as a gift is much smaller than required for a biodiversity offset for the existing development applications, let alone the larger area now proposed for development.

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It is concerning also that alternative sites on cleared and degraded land in the same ownership, in the Crookhaven catchment which may be suitable for a golf course, have not been put forward in the Proposal. Alternative sites outside the Lake catchment are also possibilities for residential and commercial development within the existing Culburra Beach urban area.

Inclusion of the Lake catchment in Jervis Bay National Park together with Ramsar listing of Lake Wollumboola would protect and conserve this internationally significant habitat for birds and represent an important gift to the Shoalhaven and wider NSW community.

We trust in your serious consideration of this matter and look forward to your reply.

Yours

Christopher Grounds

Christopher Grounds

Conservation Officer for
BirdLife Shoalhaven

shoalhaven@birdlife.org.au

EMAIL RESPONSE TO LETTER MARCH 19 2015 3.06PM

Dear Christopher
Thankyou for your email.

The Greens strongly support a much needed expansion of the National Parks estate and protected areas in New South Wales, which is currently under threat not only from climate change but also expanding fossil fuel mining, logging and inappropriate overdevelopment.

It appears that Lake Woolumboola is an ideal candidate for protection because of its unique biodiversity and the threats of overdevelopment. I understand that there are at least 28 threatened species in the area including the Green and Golden Bell Frog.

I also understand that the Jervis Bay National Park and Woollamia Nature Reserve Plan of Management NPWS 2011 considers the Lake to meet 4-5 Ramsar criteria but that this listing has been on hold due to objections by Shoalhaven City Council.

The Greens support a process for identifying lands, including the Halloran Trust lands, for protection in the Jervis Bay National park and a moratorium on development applications in these areas until this is resolved. We look forward to working with the community to make this a reality.

Kind Regards

Mehreen

Dr Mehreen Faruqi
Greens NSW MP

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Our parliamentary office is on the land of the Gadigal of the Eora nation
SIGN UP TO STAY IN TOUCH at <http://www.mehreenfaruqi.org.au/sign-up/>

From: Chris [mailto:mytcg@optusnet.com.au]
Sent: Monday, 9 March 2015 11:21 AM
To: Mehreen Faruqi; Amanda FINDLEY
Subject: LAKE WOLLUMBOOLA

To:

The Hon Dr Mehreen Faruqi MLC
Greens Spokesperson for the Environment.
Parliament House,
Macquarie St

Sydney. NSW 2000.
and
Amanda Findley
Greens candidate South Coast

Dear Mehreen and Amanda

Please find attached as a Word Document a letter from our Shoalhaven organization, BirdLife Shoalhaven, concerning the Planning proposal for Lake Wollumboola and the associated Catchment.

Yours

Chris

Christopher Grounds
Conservation Officer
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