

Draft South District Plan

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First name: Anne

Last name: Wagstaff

Suburb: 2223

Submission content: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Revised Draft South District Plan of the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC). I have lived in Oatley for more than 30 years and have been involved with the local Bushcare and Streamwatch programs. I was also on the Georges River Combined Councils Committee from 2008-2012 and continue to participate in the River Health Monitoring Program. I frequently walk through Myles Dunphy Reserve, in Oatley Park, around the Lime Kiln Bay wetlands and across Georges River on Como Bridge. Like many of my friends, my major concerns relate to the sustainability of the Georges River catchment, which is a major ecological and recreational asset of the South District. The integrity of the river, its bushland and wetlands, needs to be protected and enhanced in order to achieve the liveability and sustainability objectives of the GSC's draft plan. Planning Priority S13 - PROTECTING AND IMPROVING THE HEALTH AND ENJOYMENT OF THE DISTRICT'S WATERWAYS In this priority I believe the GSC should focus on turning urban drains into living creeks - providing benefits of water purification and climate cooling – and protecting the biologically-functional creeks we already have. This requires planned riparian zones of no less than 40 metres on either sides of the creek wherever possible. It is only this kind of width that can accommodate

large enough trees and a sufficient water filtering buffer zone. I am concerned that the stormwater and sewer infrastructure required to support 1.74 million extra people and 725,000 new homes, is inadequate. Although much has been done to improve water quality in Sydney (particularly with regards to sewage treatment) multiple point discharge, untreated terrestrial runoff and aging water infrastructure are an ongoing challenge for our waterways and for the biota and recreational opportunities they support. My experience locally is that the system is already overloaded. Dry and wet weather sewer overflows occur much more frequently than SWC targets suggest. I support Georges River Council's intention to endorse the Sydney Water Waterway Health Improvement Program that aims to improve waterway health across its stormwater area of operations. The program aims to implement works identified through the Waterways Improvement Program, developed jointly with Councils in the Georges River Catchment. An identified site is the stormwater drain at Carss Bush Park. The outcomes of this program include removal of sediment from waterways, prevention of nitrogen and phosphorous entering the waterways and a reduction in annual runoff through these waterways.

Planning Priority S16 - DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY OPEN SPACE I do not agree with the Federal Government's population growth drive. That said, it is essential that additional open space for parkland be acquired to provide breathing room and more opportunities for active recreation for the expected increased number of residents. As far back as the 1870s, authorities recognised the need to provide recreation areas to relieve crowded, polluted areas in the inner city and so they reserved the National Park south of Sydney. It is unacceptable to propose crowding more people into the current area of open space. And natural bushland should not be viewed as an opportunity for extra cycleways and walkways if that means a net loss of bushland. Instead, new space should be acquired for these desirable developments which have different objectives (exercise, sport, social interactions etc) from the maintenance of biodiversity. I do not think existing open spaces should be compromised by having additional functions imposed on

them such as organised sport. Development of creativity, self-sufficiency and motor skills, particularly in children, benefits from non-structured exercise and recreation. Organised sport does not suit all people and the State Government has just announced huge expenditure on sporting stadiums. There needs to be more investment in open space that benefits non-structured recreation and individual activities. On current Green Grid maps some of the narrow strips mapped along roads and rail lines are inadequate green belts. Wildlife corridors need breadth as well as length and connectivity. Research has demonstrated that narrow green belts favour the invasive native Noisy Miner which excludes other birds and reduces biodiversity, so these narrow strips cannot, with any honesty, be called 'green belts'.

P. 84 "improving public access to, and along, the foreshores; providing connected green space around the foreshores; conserving cultural heritage; protecting flora and fauna, and urban bushland; and recovering and reinstating more natural conditions in highly modified waterways. Enhancing community access to the coast and waterways within the District should be prioritised. This includes access for pedestrians as well as boats and other watercraft" I do not think that community access to the coast and waterways within the District needs to be prioritised; access is already free and readily available. I do not think that increasing access for motorised boats and other motorised watercraft, particularly jet skis, is beneficial to the community. The bays and inlets of the Georges River are already clogged with anchored boats that are very rarely used. In recent months Georges River has experienced hooliganism by jet ski drivers— the active nest of an Osprey (listed as Vulnerable in NSW) was deliberately targeted and destroyed by jet skiers in the lower Georges River near Oatley Park in October 2016 (<https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/cruel-jet-ski-hoos-destroy-rare-birds-nest/news-story/68a1a5806f623f2a6c277cc68d8892cb>). Introducing more of these watercraft would exacerbate the problem. Page 96: "Any land or facilities in public ownership should be retained as open space" I agree fully with this statement. Myles Dunphy Reserve in Oatley is a local

example of fragmentation and loss of parkland. Our community is faced with Georges River Council's proposal by to rezone a part of Myles Dunphy Reserve, turning recreational land into operational land enabling a multi-storey development on the site of a former bowling club. This will be alienation and fragmentation of open space. The site should be retained as public open space to serve as a buffer zone for the Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest (STIF) in the neighbouring bushland section of the Reserve. This remnant of Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest is the only one in the Georges River LGA that is of good quality, retaining a tree canopy, under story and ground cover of native species.