

NEWSLETTER – June 2017

14th April 2017

Update 23rd June 2017

Update for members of the SYDNEY HARBOUR HIGHLINE ASSOCIATION (SHHL)

With the by–election behind us it is time to review what has transpired this year and the plans for making the Highline a reality.

1. Summary of events

3rd February 2017 – Meeting with Mr Chris Muir the new Chief of Staff for Andrew Constance the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure and Trent Zimmerman –

We submitted a proposal for use of the spoil from McMahons Point tunnel shaft and commencement of Stage 1 of the SHHL.

Reply from Chris Muir advising amongst other matters that:

- **Felicity Wilson will be leading the Committee for the NSW Government.**
- **‘I can confirm that the Minister and Sydney Trains have agreed that work to create a walking path along the Lavender Bay spur can commence on the side where tracks have been removed, before the active rail line is closed on the other side of the spur.’**
- **‘The issue of the spoil from the Metro construction has been forwarded to the Minister’s department for a substantive response from the Minister’.**

We have written back to Chris Muir seeking clarification on a number of matters.

- a) Is the area of potential joint use with a walking path confined to Lavender Bay only? OR**
- b) Is it intended the path be anywhere along the line where rail has been removed in the past?**
- c) Why can’t the path be extended to the northern boundary of Luna Park now even if one of the rail lines at the southern end is removed?**

We also wrote to the two nominated tunnel contractors advising them of the community’s approaches to Government regarding the spoil. We will endeavour to meet with the successful tenderer in the next month or so.

1st March 2017 - We invited the Premier to the Community Meeting set for the Kirribilli Club on 6th March.

In the invitation we explained various issues of concern in the Lavender Bay area being:

- 1) The State Government's refusal to disclose the agreements with Luna Park.
- 2) The fact that the Wendy's Secret Garden lease has a termination clause.
- 3) The community's support for the rail corridor between Luna Park and Waverton Station being converted to the Sydney Harbour Highline (SHHL) a walking & cycling trail, with limited use by Transport Heritage when Sydney Trains no longer have use for the line – which we believe is imminent.
 - a. Stage 1 of the SHHL between Luna Park and the tunnel be commenced by use of the spoil from the McMahons Point Metro shaft being barged to the eastern shore rather than trucked out of the area.
 - b. Sydney Trains use of the corridor from the tunnel to Waverton while continued limited use of the line is required.

The Premier's office advises that they are still trying to organise a meeting for us to attend.

We also advised the Premier that removal of the spoil from the Blues Point Reserve shaft by road is a contentious issue. We suggested removing this spoil by barge to Lavender Bay and using it to create a tiered garden (as was done at Barangaroo) over part of the rail siding would solve the problem and would be a "good news" story for the Government as the by - election looms .

12th March – The Premier announces creation of a Trust to help secure the future of Wendy's Garden and contributes an initial \$30,000 but not addressing the concern that the lease could be terminated..

17th March – Writs issued for the by-election on April 8th.

22nd March – The Premier gives an "iron-clad guarantee" that the Coalition will never sell the railway land (leaving open the possibility that it could be leased) and that it would remain a community asset in the event it is not needed for rail use. "This is a unique part of the lower north shore and we will ensure it remains in public hands," she said.

The Premier also announced the Government would establish a committee to investigate creating a scenic walking track on the land.

A meeting was held with the new member Felicity Wilson and a follow up letter sent to her requesting the following:

- 1) **Details on the Luna Park deeds**
- 2) **Future installation of new rides. Luna Park should comply with planning codes and receive approvals prior to installation.**
- 3) **Lighting installed contrary to the codes and focused on residents' houses and units.**
- 4) **Status of work on Cliff top beside Harrys Park.**
- 5) **Wendy's Secret Garden – how do we make it a park?**
- 6) **Highline Committee – when will it be formed and meet?**

Since that meeting the correspondence arrived from Chris Muir which we referred to above that needs greater clarity before we know what is really happening.

It is a surprise to us that the Government is suggesting use of the 'walking path' while the rail line is still in use. This is contrary to previous responses from them. As a result we have requested another meeting with Howard Collins, the Chief Executive of Sydney Trains.

Our concern for some time is that when we successfully create the SHHL that the Government will restrict its commencement to the area from in front of Wendy's Secret Garden through to Waverton Station This will leave the area from the Garden to Luna Park as their development package which will be used by Luna Park for development or sold to another developer. We are concerned that the Government may suggest that the funds from the sale of this portion of land are required to pay for the Highline work.

24TH March 2017 – Meeting with Sandra Chipchase CEO of Destination NSW and Trent Zimmerman – plans for Stage 1 discussed.

Ms Chipchase confirmed that her Department had been advised of the upcoming formation of a committee to work on the SHHL concept. The committee to be led by Infrastructure NSW

27th March 2017 – Preliminary drawings received from landscape designers for Stage 1 of SHHL

What did we achieve if anything from the by-election? The start of funding for the maintenance of Wendy's Secret Garden and a promise with respect to the future for the Highline – **It's amazing what an election causes Politicians to do.**

What are we concerned about and what do we want to achieve?

Wendy's Secret Garden

- Make the Garden permanent (not just a lease).
- Secure the ongoing funding for its maintenance.

A website for Wendy's Secret Garden <https://www.wendyssecretgarden.org.au/> has been completed but we need to raise funds to pay for this work. The site will be maintained and updated as part of the program of public awareness and support for the SHHL project and the individual components along the corridor.

The Highline

- Close the rail line between Luna Park and the tunnel now and convert it to a park – Stage 1 of the SHHL. Sydney Trains will continue to use the line between the western end of the tunnel to Waverton Station in the near term. When Sydney trains cease use of this section it will become Stage 2 of the SHHL.
- Utilise the spoil from McMahons Point Metro shaft to commence landscaping of Stage 1.

2. Berrys Bay

- Work with the three adjoining precincts from Lavender Bay to Waverton to build a coalition of support for the use of Berrys Bay.

Waverton Precinct is aiming to convince Government of the need for a local ferry service linking the lower North Shore bays with Cockatoo Island. The SHHL would like to see Lavender Bay wharf and High Street included in this local service. The importance of High Street will be its access to the future redevelopment of the HMAS Platypus site.

3. Luna Park

- The release of the secret agreement(s) with Luna Park.

We simply don't understand why these agreements are being kept secret when all prior agreements have been made public. Why the sudden need for secrecy.

4. Cliff Top Land (Harry's Park)

Many local residents attended the announcement at the hilltop land above Luna Park.

- We were told that this land had been acquired by the State Government and would be landscaped and linked with Harry's Park.
- We weren't told that the Government failed to acquire all of the land from Northcliffe St to the escarpment.
- The Government has now designed the landscaping of this land but Luna Park is refusing to contribute funds for the landscaping of the area of land they retain. Submission of the landscaping design plans to a residents' panel has been cancelled.

Unless The Premier clarifies several matters we should be wary as:

- 1) The Government may support and eventually create the SHHL from Lavender Bay to Waverton Station but it may not commence from the current Luna Park boundary but from say Wendy's Garden leaving the opportunity to sell or grant a long-term lease to Multiplex for the land adjoining Luna Park.
- 2) There is no reason that Wendy's Garden should not now be rezoned to a Park – made permanent.
- 3) There needs to be transparency for the community as to what the legal arrangements are between the Government and Luna Park.

Let's not forget that Barangaroo remains in 'public hands' however it is leased on a long term basis to Developers/ Builders.

5. What do we intend to now do?

- 1) Coordinate plans for adjoining precinct areas.
- 2) Further develop landscape plans for Stage 1.
- 3) Meet with The Premier following an offer to do so during the election.
- 4) Subject to the results from this meeting proceed with actions to resolve outstanding matters addressed above.
- 5) Work with The Premier's committee to expedite a satisfactory plan and realistic time line for the SHHL and resolution of other matters associated with areas adjoining the SHHL.
- 6) INCREASE OUR MEMBERSHIP BASE to provide SHHL with funds to continue with landscape design work, ongoing updates and additions to the website and to grow our support base.

Our membership base is growing. However there are local residents that have attended the last three meetings we have held who are obviously as equally concerned about the issues but from whom we really need financial support by becoming members.

Membership is \$25 per annum. If you are not already a member, please go to our website <https://www.sydneyharbourhighline.org.au/> and join today.

To date we have achieved a lot of political traction by being proactive. We have created two substantial websites, added to them with drone footage and intend to expand those sites with further additions in the near future.

If the Government or the successful tenderer for the Metro agrees with our proposal for the use of spoil from McMahons Point then we will proceed with more detailed landscape design work on the eastern shore of Lavender Bay.

6. Raffle

To help raise funds for the SHHL, local artist Peter Kingston has donated to the SHHL two charcoal art works and together with support from Royal Caribbean we will be conducting a raffle in the near future. Prior to the draw we are hoping that Peter's works may be exhibited at a couple of locations in the area.

We will provide further information on this raffle shortly and your support will be greatly appreciated.

You can view the large charcoal sketch "Brigalow's Dream" on our website <https://www.sydneyharbourhighline.org.au/>

7. Heritage Train Ride

We are waiting for further advice from Transport Heritage about another 'Train Day' along the line. For those who missed out in February it will be an opportunity to participate.

8. In summary

To date our proactive approach to these issues has resulted in

- high level talks with Government;
- in August 2016, the Government reacquired the lease on the cliff top site above Luna Park from Multiplex for \$3.2 million and announced it would be transformed into a public park.
- the establishment of a Trust for Wendy's Secret Garden and initial Government funding of \$30,000;
- an election promise that
 - a. the rail land will remain a community asset, and
 - b. the establishment of a committee to investigate creating a scenic walking track along this stretch of railway land;
- agreement that work to create a walking path along the Lavender Bay spur can commence on the side where tracks have been removed, before the active rail line is closed on the other side of the spur.

However, the Government announcements are still very shallow and we are frustrated by delays or absence of responses from our local member and from Government.

We are concerned.

Yours sincerely



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Latest Announcement

22 June 2017 – we are delighted that, following our representations to the Premier and to Government on the benefits of barging the spoil from the Blues Point Reserve shaft and using it to commence landscaping of Stage 1 of the Sydney Harbour High Line, the Government announced that the contract for tunnelling had been awarded and the spoil will be removed by barge– reducing impacts to the road network and cutting truck movements.

We will now further our discussions with the successful tenderer, John Holland CPB Contractors Ghella Joint Venture, on using the spoil to commence landscaping on Stage 1 of the High Line.