

ITEM NO: 24

SUBJECT: PRECIS OF SELECTED CORRESPONDENCE, 19/01/2009

FILE NO: F03480

Recommendation:

That the Précis of Selected Correspondence be received and appropriate letters forwarded where necessary.

1. 21 November 2008 – Alan Cattermole, Manager Assets and Contract Management

Letter in response to petition for shade in Glenbrook Park. (attachment 1)

2. 24 November 2008 – Mayor Searle

Letter to Carmel Tebbut MP, Deputy Premier in response to her letter of 11 November 2008 regarding the New Regional Waste and Environment Levy. (attachment 2)

3. 27 November 2008 – Petition from 6 Yellow Rock residents

To the General Manager calling for maintenance of a gravel section of Yellow Rock Road

4. 16 December 2008 – Petition from 12 members of Glenbrook Gems Playgroup

To Santa c/- the General Manager requesting shade over the play equipment at Glenbrook Park.

5. 22 December 2008 – Petition from 42 residents of Leura

To Project Manager RTA, cc Councillor Terri Hamilton calling for noise mitigation from Great Western Highway upgrade (attachment 3).

6. 7 January 2009 – General Manager

To Mr Phil Koperberg, Member for Blue Mountains concerning the offer from RTA regarding Lawson Community Hall (attachment 4).

Attachment 1

21 November 2008

Community and Corporate Group

Reference File: F00258 - 08/320375

Doc No: 08/336364

Ms Joanne Grenenger
[ADDRESS PROTECTED]

Dear Ms Grenenger

SUBJECT Shade in Glenbrook Park

Thank you for taking the time to gather signatures and write to the Council about the shade in Glenbrook Park. Your petition will be noted in the Council minutes.

Council has been aware of the need for additional shade since the big tree was so seriously lopped. A shade shelter is planned to be constructed close to the play area. The contract for the supply and installation is currently being let now and it should be installed shortly after Christmas.

A main contributing factor to the bad condition of the eucalyptus tree was the amount of activity that occurs in the park; pedestrian use compacts the root zones of the trees. It is anticipated that the high levels of use will continue in Glenbrook Park so no extra large trees will be planted in the high use area. Extra trees will be planted in areas with less pedestrian traffic which will eventually provide additional shade.

Your suggestion of a notice on the shed is a good one, and a suitable notice will be made up.

Yours faithfully

ALAN CATTERMOLE
Manager, Assets and Contract Management

Attachment 2

24 November 2008

Office of the Mayor

Reference File: F04862

Carmel Tebbutt MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Climate Change and Environment / Minister for Commerce
Level 30, Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister Tebbutt,

SUBJECT Proposed New Regional Waste and Environment Levy

In response to your letter of 11 November 2008, (DOC08/53138) we would like to formally respond to the announcement of the NSW State Government Mini-Budget.

The NSW Mini-budget was only released 2 weeks ago at the time of writing and there has been little time to properly analyse the impacts of the New Regional Waste and Environment Levy by landfill owners. At this early stage, however, we believe that it is not in the best interest of certain sectors of Local Government in NSW.

BMCC is strongly opposed to the introduction of the New Regional Waste and Environment Levy. We believe that the budget impact of the levy will reduce our ability to provide effective waste avoidance, reduction and recycling programs to the Blue Mountains community, in effect reducing environmental outcomes for the community. The existing self funded programs implemented by BMCC for reducing waste to landfill (including hazardous waste collection, kerbside recycling, kerbside green waste chipping and many waste education programs) have been highly successful. We do not expect that any additional reduction of waste to landfill will be achieved by the introduction of the new levy.

The NSW State Government has stated that areas affected by the Sydney Metropolitan Area Levy have decreased waste to landfill by 3% per capita and that areas affected by the lower Extended Sydney Area Levy have increased waste to landfill by 3% per capita, (since 2000). This is the primary justification for introducing the new levy. The Blue Mountains has in the same time without the impact of any levy achieved a **decrease of waste to landfill of 25.1% per capita** (since 2000).

The DECC Sustainability Programs Division has published a Good Practice Target for kerbside recycling collection of 5.5 kg per household per week. BMCC introduced a new MBG based kerbside recycling contract in July 2008 which is already harvesting **7.5 kg per household per week, 45% above the Good Practice benchmark**. The NSW State Government claim that households in Council areas not subject to Waste and Environment Levies recycle 20% less is not accurate for the BMCC Local Government Area.

The long term waste strategy for the Blue Mountains involves the introduction of an AWT in the next 5-10 years. The new regional and coastal Waste and Environment Levy, rising to \$70 per tonne over the next 7 years (plus rise and fall), will thwart the ability of BMCC to invest in AWT as a long term waste disposal strategy due to any capacity for the community to pay for additional services and/or infrastructure being absorbed by the new levy.

The new levy will also reduce the ability of BMCC to direct money towards local waste reduction programs which will result in a reduction in environmental benefits for the people of the Blue Mountains. Specific programs currently under development include:

- Feasibility Studies for Commercial Recycling.
- Expanding community education programs to include a wider range of modules including energy efficiency and water conservation.
- Extended rollout of smaller 140L mobile garbage bin service for kerbside waste collection.
- Implementation of Alternative Daily Cover for landfill operations.
- Construction and development of the improved resource recovery facilities at Katoomba and Blaxland Waste Management Facilities.

The mini budget identifies that participant Councils will receive a 100% return from the levy for household waste for the first two years, reducing to 50% thereafter. However there is no guarantee that any particular local Council will receive sufficient levy funds for specific waste reduction programs and/or infrastructure already included in long term waste strategies. This has the potential to severely reduce some Councils' ability to provide services and programs in the long term.

Overall, the cost impact of the mini-budget will be particularly detrimental to regional and rural local Councils who are currently subject to the greatest pressure for new infrastructure due to the rapid population growth associated with the "sea-change" (or "tree-change") phenomenon. We are highly disappointed that there was no consultation with Local Government or any industry bodies in the development of the new levy.

Effectively, the levy is a new tax on local communities that syphons revenue into the State Government's budget.

The implementation of a "One Size Fits All" approach to the new regional Waste and Environment Levy is not favoured. We believe that the Council areas which have the least proactive campaigns to reduce waste to landfill are not being captured in the new levy area and many Councils which have a wide range of innovative strategies and best practice (such as Blue Mountains) are being penalised in spite of excellent performance in waste management activities.

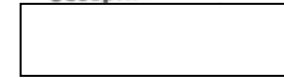
We request that the condition of the mini-budget which introduces the new Regional Waste & Environment Levy excludes the Blue Mountains Local Government Area due to the reasons outlined above. This decision will result in the continuation of BMCC's excellent and innovative waste reduction programs and ensure that the timely implementation of alternative waste technology for the further treatment of waste before landfilling is possible.

Yours faithfully

ADAM SEARLE
Mayor

Attachment 3

Josephine Lamb.



22nd December 2008

Siva Subramaniam
Project Manager
Roads and Traffic Authority
PO Box 973
Parramatta CBD NSW 2124

Your Reference: 069373/RM/Resident.

Dear Mr Subramaniam,

Thank you for your letter of 25th July 2008 in response to concerns I raised with the RTA via my Council representative about mitigation of noise levels emanating from the current upgrading of the Great Western Highway between Leura Mall and Queens Road.

In your letter you have outlined a procedure for determining whether consideration of noise mitigation is required. I would be interested to know if any data exists for the noise level of the highway prior to construction of the upgrade to allow comparison. My experience is that noise from the road has increased significantly since work began and this has been not only during the hours of actual construction but also from traffic outside work hours due to the raising of the road level.

The visual impact of the highway upgrade is also of concern. The cutting of trees and the raising and widening of the highway have resulted in traffic being much more visible now to residents in this area than previously.

From discussions with other residents in this area, I have ascertained that they have also felt the impact of the highway roadwork on their quality of life. While they realize that noise pollution is unavoidable during the construction phase of such an undertaking, they all expressed hope that the RTA would take effective action to minimize the noise and visual pollution produced by the highway once it is fully operational. Some possible solutions suggested were the building of noise barriers, the planting of trees and the provision of double glazing of windows in affected properties.

I have attached for your information a petition signed by residents of this area in support of these concerns.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J Lamb".

Josephine Lamb.

cc. Mr. Glen Sherlock, Strategic Planning Specialist - Transport, BMCC
 Ms. Terri Hamilton, Councillor (Ward 1) BMCC
 The Hon. Phil Koperberg MP, State Member for Blue Mountains
 The Hon. Bob Debus MP, Federal Member for Macquarie

Attachment 4

Office of the General Manager

Reference File: F04913

Doc: 09/1387

7 January 2009

Mr Phil Koperberg
Member for Blue Mountains
PO Box 172
SPRINGWOOD NSW 2777

Dear Mr Koperberg,

SUBJECT: Offer from RTA regarding Lawson Community Hall

The Council has recently received a letter (dated 2nd December 2008) from the RTA outlining their current position in relation to the Lawson Community Hall. A copy of this letter is attached for your information. The RTA position has substantially changed from the offer made by the Minister for Roads in his letter to you dated 22nd November 2007 (copy enclosed) with this position being reinforced by a letter to the Council from the RTA's Mr Steve Arnold dated 12th December 2007 (copy also enclosed). The recent RTA proposal requires the reinstatement of the portico by the Council rather than the RTA and for payment by the Council, at an agreed market value, for the transfer of the land to the Council. This will add considerably to the cost for Council to retain the Hall.

The Council has already spent considerable sums of money in relation to the Hall in response to the original Highway design and in recent times in consideration of the changed Highway design. The previous offer from the Minister for Roads would be of considerable assistance to the Council and community in the retention and subsequent utilisation of the Lawson Community Hall.

I have separately written to the RTA's Acting General Manager Development program on this matter and a copy of that letter is enclosed for your information.

Your assistance is sought by the Council to persuade the RTA to reinstate their previous offer. Your representations to the Minister for Roads in 2007 were instrumental in gaining the original offer to redesign the Highway and provide the opportunity to retain the main body of the Hall. Your continued representation and support to the RTA and relevant Ministers to encourage them to stand by their previous offer would be greatly appreciated.

If you require further information on this matter please contact me.

Yours faithfully

PHIL PINYON
General Manager