

# LURLINE STREET KATOOMBA (Waratah to Merriwa Street) LANDSCAPE & STREET TREE PLANTING PLAN

## FINAL REPORT



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**APPENDICES (in separate document)**

- A. The Brief dated February 2015 prepared by Blue Mountains City Council
  - B. Lurline Street Feasibility Study prepared by Blue Mountains City Council
  - C. Letter of response to Council's invitation to form a partnership
  - D. Minutes of meeting held at Katoomba RSL on 14 April 2015
  - E. Letter from CAB Consulting Pty Ltd to Council on 24 April 2015 regarding services investigation
  - F. Services locator findings
  - G. Letter from CAB Consulting Pty Ltd to Council of 30 April 2015 regarding overhead power lines
  - H. Letter from RSL dated 25 August 2015
- Slide Presentation to Council 7 August 2015 on memory stick

## **THE BRIEF**

The Brief dated February 2015 was prepared by Blue Mountains City Council (Appendix A).

### **BACKGROUND TO THE BRIEF**

This project is seen by Blue Mountains City Council as a 'precursor' to a future, larger project; to consider streetscape improvements along key access routes to Echo Point with the objective of improving the visual and physical amenity of these routes.

The specific background to this project was a report by the Group Manager, Community & Corporate, dated 26 May 2009. This followed a Council resolution (Minute no. 107, 24/04/09) prompted by correspondence from Mrs Marie Wood.

A comprehensive report that was presented to Council on 10 November 2009; 'Lurline Street Feasibility Study' (Appendix B).

The report refers to an estimate of cost of \$3-3.5M to "undertake major infrastructure renewal" and noted that such amount would be well beyond Council resources at that time (which proved to be the case).

The invitation for this specific project was the strong desire, particularly as expressed by the Katoomba Chamber of Commerce & Community to commence planting that will potentially become an avenue of street trees along this major access route to Echo Point, perhaps prompted by considerations for celebrating the 2015 centenary of Gallipoli.

A range of general background reports and initiatives relevant to this project are listed on the next page.

## **THE COMMISSION**

Craig Burton of CAB Consulting Pty Ltd and Ron Powell of Powell & Associates Pty Ltd responded to an invitation from Blue Mountains City Council to form an association for this project called "the partnership". The response to the invitation is included at Appendix C.

## PROJECT PROCESS

### 1. Provision of data

At the initial meeting with Project Manager, Patricia Lane-Gonzalez, on 10 April 2015 the following documents were provided (on loan) from Council's Planning Library:

- a. Echo Point Katoomba, Blue Mountains Development Control Plan No.5 adopted 19 July 1988.
- b. Draft Echo Point Plan of Management August 1995 prepared by EDAW (Aust) Pty Ltd.
- c. Plan of Management for Proposed Echo Point Crown Reserve September 2000.
- d. Heritage Impact Statement in relation to the proposed reconstruction of a collapsed section of the Prince Henry Cliff Walk, near Queen Elizabeth Lookout Echo Point November 2008 prepared by David Beaver.

Also tabled was a Survey Plan.

Burton and Powell noted that the Survey Plan did not contain any information about the RSL's site or any information about services on Council's footpath.

Burton and Powell noted that they needed such information before any real progress could be made, with the exception of commencing the process of consultation with the Stakeholders.

### 2. Meeting with Working Group

A meeting was held at Katoomba RSL on 14 April 2015 including representatives from Katoomba Chamber of Commerce & Community, the RSL and Blue Mountains City Council. The minutes are included at Appendix D.

Considerable discussion took place about the notion of the project providing "an evocative living memorial for this important precinct"...

There was some reluctance on the part of the RSL participants to place much priority on this aspect, preferring that street tree planting be the priority.

### 3. Services Information

Patricia Lane-Gonzalez agreed with Burton and Powell that no detailed proposals for the Lurline Street footpath could be developed without detailed information on services located within the footpath.

It was obvious by the existence of various services access covers that there were numerous services including local and regional Telstra, gas and water within the footpath.

Burton and Powell wrote to Council on 24 April 2015 (Appendix E).

Council engaged the services of a specialist services locator who carried out the investigation on 19 May 2015. Refer to Appendix F for findings.

#### **4. Overhead Power Lines**

The location of overhead power lines were cited by Burton and Powell as a major constraint to the achievement of a significant objection of the brief, ie to achieve trees of the size and structure befitting such a significant public domain.

Burton and Powell wrote to Council on 30 April 2015 urging Council to address the issue of undergrounding power lines in Lurline Street with Integral Energy, with all possible haste. Refer to letter at Appendix G.

#### **5. Levels of RSL Carpark and Accurate Base Plan for the Project**

The RSL was not able to provide survey information about their carpark that they thought might be found in their records.

Accordingly, Burton and Powell carried out site measurements and levels of sufficient accuracy for the preparation of proposals to be considered by the RSL, the Katoomba Chamber of Commerce & Community and Blue Mountains City Council.

## DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

### Tree Types and Availability

Burton and Powell undertook extensive investigations of various sources with particular reference to:

- a) The Blue Mountains Street Tree Masterplan
- b) Their extensive experiences of street trees throughout Australia from an historic viewpoint as well as contemporary projects
- c) Various nursery suppliers of advanced trees to consider current availability

The Working Party noted that the Street Tree Masterplan need not be followed if strong alternative recommendations were presented.

### Plant Selection for Lurline Street

In discussions with the Working Party and in the opinion of Burton and Powell, there was strong merit to choose trees for the public land of Lurline Street that have become almost signatures for the Blue Mountains in evocatively marking the progress of the seasons.

Spring blossom and autumn foliage colours alike are regular motivators for visitors to the Mountains.

The success of the medium sized, ornamental pears (Pyrus "Capitol") in the approach to Leura was discussed.

However, the severe constraints posed by existing services in the footpath precluded the partners' recommending planting within the footpath.

As well as future planting of Pyrus "Capitol" in a new widened footpath in an upgraded public domain.

### Plant Selection for RSL Precinct

**Historical references in particular pointed strongly to the suitability of "Kurrajongs", (Brachychiton populneum) for this precinct of Lurline Street.**

In presentations to, firstly, Council officers on 10 June 2015 and, subsequently, to the Working Party at Council Chambers on 7 August 2015, the attributes of Kurrajongs were summarised under 3 main headings:

**i. Significance to Indigenous Cultures**

Seeds have food uses. Fibres are used in fishing net fabrication. Craig Burton has anecdotal evidence of planting of Kurrajongs by various Aboriginal peoples, when agricultural activity is generally not acknowledged.

**ii. Significance to Colonial Cultures**

The foliage of Kurrajongs can be cut and fed to stock at times of drought. The trees bounce back giving them a reputation of being "everlasting" and are greatly revered.

They have been used and remain today as street trees in many NSW towns such as Manildra, Parkes, Barellan etc.

In many paddocks around Parkes numerous Kurrajongs are scattered throughout vast grain fields, the only trees remaining after all previous native vegetation has been cleared.

**iii. Patriotic, Memorial and Commemorative**

In 1916, after the success of World War I recruitment drives like the “Cooee March”, “the Kurrajongs” was the name given to a group of 114 recruits who set out from Inverell wearing sprigs of Kurrajong on their white hats in a train decorated with Kurrajong branches. The train gathered other “Kurrajongs” en route to training camp in Narrabri.

Following World War I, a memorial avenue of 215 Kurrajongs was planted in Inverell.

A re-enactment of the Kurrajongs march will take place in Inverell in 2016.

**Availability of Kurrajongs**

Our investigations concluded that fine specimens, up to 6 metres tall were available, large enough to create an impressive impact right from time of initial planting.

**Planting Requirements for Kurrajongs**

The ultimate size and spread of Kurrajongs, 20-30 metres and size of root balls of 6 metre high semi mature specimens, dictated that the only suitable place for this project would be in the 3 metre wide strip of land at the edge of the RSL carpark.



## PLANTING PROPOSALS

### 1. To Satisfy the Requirements of this Brief

#### a) Blue Mountains City Council Footpath eastern side between Waratah and Merriwa Streets

The conclusion of Burton and Powell is that NO PLANTINGS are proposed at this time for this zone of the site described in the Brief due to the severe constraints posed by existing services in the footpath and the location of overhead power lines.

#### b) RSL Land

For the 3 metre wide strip of land between Council's footpath and RSL's paved carpark area Burton and Powell proposed the planting of 7 semi mature Kurrajongs (*Brachychiton populneum*) at 6.6 metre spacings.

To ensure adequate quantity and quality of soil available for root development to ensure optimum tree growth the proposals including building a retaining structure for the Kurrajongs to be planted at the same level and gradient as the existing footpath effectively widening the footpath to the east of the existing pavement.

Additional planting of massed Gallipoli Rosemary shrubs are proposed to screen existing installations of services' kiosks within this 3 metre zone.

### 2. Future Planting Proposals

The Brief noted that this project is seen as a precursor to a future larger project for the length of Lurline Street to connect with the upgraded streetscape at Echo Point.

This aspect was noted in our offer of services as being "a strong attraction to our decision to offer this submission".

In response, detailed street tree proposals were prepared and presented for both sides of Lurline Street for the entire block between Waratah and Merriwa Streets as well as a broad concept for conceptually titled LURLINE PLAZA.

Proposed trees would be incorporated into a future upgraded public domain within widened footpaths and special surface treatments with the zone in front of the RSL having the potential to become an attractive pedestrian space on special occasions, perhaps closed to vehicular traffic at regular (say once per month) occasions in addition to the traditional Anzac Day services.

Broad concepts were also prepared and presented for a MEMORIAL SQUARE to be developed incorporating the existing Doctor Allen Alex Park at the corner of Lurline and Waratah Streets as well as a concept to develop themed planting at the nodes of intersections of each cross street with Lurline Street as far as Birdwood Avenue.

## PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL'S PROJECT TEAM AND THE WORKING GROUP

- a) A preliminary presentation was made on 10 June 2015 to various Council staff. The possible inclusion of Pyrus Capitol into the roadway was discussed.

All agreed that the considerable cost and design requirements to make the necessary modifications to road surfaces; drainage etc was well beyond the possible scope of this project.

Accordingly, it was agreed that in the presentation to the Working Group that the ONLY trees which would be firmly proposed would be the 7 Kurrajongs recommended for the RSL land and that all others would be clearly described as recommendations for future planting.

- b) The presentation to the Working Group took place in Council Chambers on 7 August 2015.

Both Craig Burton and Ron Powell spoke to the following slides projected onto the large format screens.

Discussion and questions occurred throughout.

The participants subsequently viewed large scale drawings and further discussion and questioning took place.

### SUMMARY OF SLIDES

1.	The Brief	Identification of scope for the project
2.	Context	The most significant gateway in the Blue Mountains
3.	Underground Power Lines	Letter to Blue Mountains City Council
4.	Public Domain Upgrade	Letter to Blue Mountains City Council
5.	Services Locations Plan	Part A: Waratah Street end of Lurline Street
6.	Services Location Plan	Part B: Merriwa Street end of Lurline Street
7.	Available Site	Large scale identification of scope for the project
8.	The Lurline Overview	Overall concept
9.	The Lurline Overview	Potential staging plan and concept of creating NODES of street tree planting at intersections
10.	The Lurline Stage 1	Concept of Memorial Square, Lurline Plaza and commemorative planting

11.	Paving Strips	Contemporary example of different paving materials in public domains
12.	Paving Strips	Contemporary example of different paving materials in public domains showing potential of incorporating commemorative and memorial words in pavement
13.	Lurline Plaza Concept Plan	Showing 7 Kurrajongs on RSL land with possible painted strips on roadway as precursor to future public domain upgrade
14.	Kurrajong Branches	1916 Kurrajong recruiting march
15.	Inverell Memorial Avenue	
16.	National Herbarium Facts Sheet	Colonial era and indigenous significance of Kurrajongs
17.	"Green Church" of Kurrajongs	War Memorial in Gundagai
18.	Commemorative Avenue of Kurrajongs	Cowra Cemetery
19, 20, 21.	Kurrajong Street Trees	Castlemaine Victoria Castlemaine Victoria Barellan NSW
22, 23.	Available Kurrajongs	Advanced plantings in nurseries
24.	RSL Carpark	Details showing need to form better retaining walls
25.	Sandstone "Logs"	Words illustrating concepts for sandstone log retaining walls
26.	Sandstone Log	Photo of individual unit
27.	Contemporary Example	Sandstone logs used as retaining and informal amphitheatre at Georges Heights
28, 29.	Contemporary Examples	"Pirramimma", Wentworth Falls
30.	Plan of Lurline Plaza	Discussion of under storey planting of Gallipoli rosemary
31.	Data Sheet	Gallipoli rosemary
32.	Photo of Gallipoli rosemary	Griffith
33.	Lurline Plaza Context Plan	Basis for discussion about future planting options
34.	Lurline Plaza Detail Plan	Basis for discussion about future planting options
35.	Pyrus "Capitol"	Illustration full bloom
36.	Pyrus "Capitol"	Illustration freshly leafed
37.	Pyrus "Capitol"	Illustration autumn foliage at Leura Mall
38.	Claret Ash	Illustration of autumn foliage

## RESPONSES TO PRESENTATION

### a) At the meeting

Katoomba Chamber of Commerce & Community in particular, Marie Wood, expressed strong support for the proposed Kurrajongs.

Marie Wood also expressed disappointment that no trees could be planted on the footpath of either side of Lurline Street between Waratah and Merriwa Streets.

The proposals for use of ornamental pears in future plantings was also strongly supported.

Marie Wood asked whether some ornamental pears could be planted in the near future in various places along Lurline Street to replace previous, failed or poorly performing trees and shrubs.

Council staff member, Susan Bell, supported the concept and offered to examine the possibility.

The RSL expressed reservations about the Kurrajongs for 2 main reasons:

- o **Masking of views into the carparking area.**

Craig Burton and Ron Powell contended that this would not be of major concern as the available Kurrajong specimens illustrated already have canopies that only commence 2 metres above the ground and can be raised further as the trees grow.

Also, due to the carpark being below the footpath, the landform allows additional oversighting.

- o **Potential constraint**

To future development on the carpark site, Burton and Powell suggested this should not be a problem as the existing set back line of the adjoining Clarendon Hotel (6+ metres) would probably have to be maintained and the Kurrajongs could be incorporated into a forecourt to future development.

Also, should entries to the development occur near the center of the site, the middle Kurrajong could be relocated in the future. Experience has demonstrated the practicability of successfully relocating mature Kurrajongs.

### b) Subsequent to the Meeting

The Katoomba RSL sent a letter to Council dated 25 August 2015 (Appendix H). The letter made no reference to Kurrajongs or use of sandstone logs to increase soil depth and thus, by inference, has rejected the measures proposed for the project.

Instead the Katoomba RSL's letter proposed that, by planting 6-7 ornamental pear trees on their strip of land, and other minor plantings that those actions would "finalise this planting project".

The Katoomba RSL went ahead and planted poor quality, small specimens of ornamental pears at quite wide spacings.

**The result thus achieved is a disappointingly much lesser standard than that proposed.**

## FUTURE ACTIONS

The investigations and analyses that this project achieved confirmed the CONCLUSION enunciated in Council report "Lurline Street Feasibility Study" file no. F02082-09/174874 dated 10/11/09.

That conclusion was:

**that to achieve an appropriate scale of amenity and visual impact medium to large size trees would be required.**

Burton and Powell's investigation and analyses confirmed that the constraints posed by existing utilities in and over the footpaths currently prevent viable street tree planting.

Council's report and current investigations also confirm the need for large scale renewal of the public domain in Lurline Street.

Burton and Powell strongly urge:

- 1. Blue Mountains City Council to include a comprehensive improvement plan for the public domain of Lurline Street as a matter of the highest priority.**
- 2. That for the block between Waratah and Merriwa Streets consideration be given to increasing footpath width at least on the eastern side to accommodate street tree planting.**
- 3. A more ambitious and far reaching revision of the public domain should consider the options of development of a shared pedestrian and vehicular zone in front of the RSL notionally to be called LURLINE PLAZA.**
- 4. Council negotiate with RSL regarding development options for their site with the potential to offer incentives in return for a significant contribution by the developer towards the construction of Lurline Plaza over and above the normal Section 94 contributions that would be required.**