



CANOBOLAS CONSERVATION ALLIANCE  
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## CANOBOLAS CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

### MEMBERS NEWSLETTER No. 2

December 2021

This is the second of a series of occasional newsletters for members of the Canobolas Conservation Alliance Inc. (CCA), providing an update of activities towards its principal aim of protecting the Mount Canobolas State Conservation Area (SCA) from inappropriate development.

Thank you to those members who sent in comments on the first of these newsletters; the Committee appreciate any feedback and involvement from the wider CCA community. Our campaign to ensure that the network of mountain biking trails proposed by Orange City Council (OCC) is not constructed within the SCA continues.

#### Council Reports

Despite numerous requests, both formally in correspondence from the CCA and through media comments, OCC has failed to produce any up to date public documentation to support their mountain bike park proposal, although it is understood that they continue to work towards the project's consideration as a *State Significant Development*.

No evidence has been seen of an Economic Report or Business Case, nor of the costs of ongoing assessment and planning. Neither the supposedly completed *Preliminary Environmental Impact Assessment*, nor any archaeological constraints reports, have been released to the general public.

Due to the Caretaker period surrounding the council elections, it is apparent that OCC have not progressed the application. The new councillors will presumably decide on the next course of action, and CCA will continue our lobbying of new councillors to ensure they are fully aware of the consequences of any developments in the SCA.

#### Recent CCA Activities

- Numerous items have appeared in print media, including Earth First articles, and Letters to the Editor in the Central Western Daily and Orange City Life. Thank you to the many people who have added their voices to this campaign. Television and radio interviews with our President, Andrew Rawson, have also occurred.
- The first CCA Factsheet was produced very shortly after the previous newsletter. See: <https://savemtcanobolassca.files.wordpress.com/2021/09/cca-fact-sheet-final-reduced.pdf>
- Minutes of the AGM held on 1<sup>st</sup> November were distributed to the wider membership. The position of Vice-President remains vacant. If you would be prepared to take on this role, please contact us.
- The role of Webmaster is another vacancy that calls for some-one with some experience, and willingness to give a bit of time occasionally. Please let us know if you're interested.
- The website unfortunately suffered a crash in late October which took some time to restore. It is back up and running with a fresh look, although recent media is yet to be uploaded. In the interim, all these media items can be accessed on our Facebook page.

- The NSW Greens MLC, Cate Faehrmann visited Orange in early November and gave whole-hearted support to our campaign.
- Jenny Pratten and Sandra Chrystall have continued to publicise the CCA at the ECCO stall at the monthly Farmers' Markets and have developed activities to engage the younger community.
- Engagement on Facebook continues, and being able to share pages from a booklet titled "Sanctuary", produced by Canobolas Public School's Year 6, 2020 has been a delight.
- Thanks also go to Kylie Silvester for the short video clip she kindly produced. It is available on the CCA website.
- Andrew Rawson has continued to share his presentation on the values of the SCA with various local organisations, including Rotary, CWA groups and ECCO.
- The CCA is currently participating in Nature Conservation Council (NCC) and National Parks Association (NPA) Working Groups investigating bike tracks in National Parks and Reserves. (*See below about submissions to the Draft NPWS Biking Strategy*)
- In the lead-up to the recent Council elections candidates were encouraged to give their response to the mountain biking developments. Most were either against or equivocal in their support, which suggests that our lobbying of candidates has had some success.
- Several of our members stood for election on the Greens ticket in Orange, while Andrew Rawson stood in Cabonne as an Independent. Final results are not expected to be available until December 20<sup>th</sup>, however it would appear that our stance against OCC will be a continuing issue despite a number of fresh Councillors. Early counting suggests we will be offering congratulations to CCA members Andrew Rawson in Cabonne and Mel McDonnell in Orange. Greens candidate Dr David Mallard also appears to have won a seat in Orange Council.

### **Indigenous Commitment**

While CCA members continue to work with local Wiradjuri Elders, the Indigenous community has become active.

The newly formed Gaanha-bula Action Group held a public meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November, attended by more than 100 people. Elders expressed their dissatisfaction with OCC's consultation process with the local Indigenous community and reiterated the values of the Mountain in their culture. Andrew Rawson, on behalf of both himself and Rosemary Stapleton, gave a presentation on the Aboriginal artefacts recorded over the last three years as part of the post-fire voluntary surveying in the SCA, along with a brief overview of the biodiversity on the Mountain.

Gaanha-bula has been nominated by Elders as an Aboriginal Place. It is a central site for the Wiradjuri people, akin to a "Cathedral" in the broader landscape (to quote Uncle James Williams), an aspect of their cultural and spiritual values which has been largely ignored. Dual naming, (Gaanha-bula Mount Canobolas), has also been formally proposed.

A statement on behalf of Orange Local Aboriginal Lands Council (OLALC), which rejected the development on Gaanha-bula, was read out.

The meeting was followed later in the afternoon by a "Corroboree" and Smoking Ceremony at the Federal Falls campground. The group of dancers included men and boys from Orange, Cowra, Wellington and Dubbo. Uncle James Williams, having earlier noted the historic nature of the gathering, conducted a final closing circle and a Smoking Ceremony for all attendees.



Corroboree at Federal Falls campground, 6 November 2021 (*Photo: Rosemary Stapleton*)

In line with the CCA, the Action Group firmly stated “We’re not opposed to the bike track. We’re opposed to it occurring in significant areas”.

NITV footage of the occasion aired on 9<sup>th</sup> November in a segment on “The Point”, as well as a news item the following day. This can be accessed at:

<https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2021/11/09/amazing-aboriginal-heritage-site-threatened-100km-mountain-bike-track?fbclid=IwAR031R7n-8ewTjW2Lf-IVFNZPczmGmfDivak8NqJptLLO2ljsqYmzJsrA9Y>

### **NPWS Cycling Policy, Strategy and Guidelines for Implementation**

Three draft documents were released towards the end of November, inviting public comment before a deadline of January 30, 2022. Details and documents can be accessed at:

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/park-management/community-engagement/cycling-strategy-and-cycling-policy> .

It is obvious that the biking fraternity are strong lobbyists for more and more access to the national park estate. It is vital that the conservation and protection of biodiversity and cultural values within this estate remains at the forefront of its management, rather than the provision of

increasing recreational developments that may not be sustainable. It is important that CCA members make an effort to engage with these documents and take the opportunity to complete the survey on the above website and/or write a submission. Guidelines for submissions are being prepared and will be circulated as soon as they are available.

Some of our members participated in an on-line public presentation held by DPIE on December 1<sup>st</sup>. The webinar was recorded officially and can be accessed at:

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/6802954> [select: ... "a new cycling strategy for NPWS..."].

### Extras

Two nominations of interest are progressing:

- The proposal for the SCA to be listed as an Area of Outstanding Biodiversity Value (AOBV), nominated in 2018, is apparently moving through the assessment process (at last).
- *Prostanthera gilesii*, known only from the SCA, has been listed as an Asset of Intergenerational Significance (AIS), with the development of a conservation action plan in process, recognising the importance of habitat for threatened species.

### 2022

Following the AGM motion that membership subscriptions would be for a calendar year, you may expect to receive a renewal notice in January. We would hope that all current members will be prepared to renew their membership and consider ways in which you might be actively engaged with the Alliance. All details will be on your renewal notice.

**Thank you for your continuing support; our campaign will continue in 2022.**

**Meanwhile, best wishes to everyone,  
enjoy a safe and happy Festive Season!**

