



A consortium of ratepayers, owning in excess of 100ha of land at Blundell's Swamp at Lower Portland, has lodged a Proposal to plan, fund, and execute roadworks to raise the level of River Rd above the natural full level of this valuable wetland. This will have the effect of ensuring all-weather access along River Rd, and rapid flood recovery, while preserving wildlife values.

At present the road is around half a metre below the natural maximum, causing annoying delays and risking community safety in times of personal emergency or natural disaster. It has also led to calls to drain this beautiful waterway and destroy an irreplaceable ecological community. The solution to all these dangers and difficulties is to Raise the Road -- a Community solution to a community problem.

BACKGROUND

Blundell's Swamp is one of the few relatively untouched Hawkesbury wetlands, and has a catchment that is free of agricultural and domestic pollution. It is approximately 25ha in extent, and was formed after the end of the last Ice Age by the action of floodwaters building up the river-bank higher than the land behind it. Over millennia vegetation grew and died in the low-lying land, forming a layer of Wetland Sediment at least several metres thick, which holds water and created the wetland. From the distribution of this Sediment, which takes thousands of years to accumulate, we are able to establish with certainty the wetland's full extent and maximum level.

For further information please see our website www.blundellswamp.com/raisetheroad and our social media Blundell's Swamp Wildlife Refuge.

We have been a Wildlife Refuge under the NPWS Act since 1982, and have a Conservation Agreement with the Biodiversity Conservation Trust CA0652. We were featured on the BCT website at <https://www.bct.nsw.gov.au/news-stories/blundells-swamp>

We are a contributor to NatureMapr (username BlundellsSwamp) -- <https://naturemapr.org/users/sightings/30876/0?viewmode=detail> We have 485 sightings, placing us in the top 3% of contributors -- they include 7 NSW Government Priority Species, 5 rare, and 7 vulnerable. We are an irreplaceable wildlife habitat.

We are a mapped Coastal Wetland under SEPP (Hazards & Resilience) 2021 and have been noted on numerous scientific papers and inquiries from the 1970s to the present.

We believe Blundell's Swamp is one of the most significant wetlands in the Hawkesbury floodplain. We aim to provide all-weather access along River Rd, and rapid flood recovery, without interfering with its natural hydrology.

OUR PROPOSAL

From the distribution of Wetland Sediment we are able to establish with certainty the wetland's maximum level at 3.1m AHD, above which it drains via its natural spillway to the River. It is therefore our proposal that the road carriageway should not be below 3.2m AHD, and that the natural spillway be retained

Recent survey data supplied by Council shows the lowest road level at 2.78m AHD, meaning that the required fill is less than 0.5m. All other aspects of the roadway can be left as they are. Once this is done, the carriageway at this crossing will be clear in all weathers, and, after a flood event, at the same time as the remainder of River Rd.

Advanced consultations with Council have taken place, A detailed proposal with Engineering drawings has been lodged, and a satisfactory Geotechnical Report supplied. We are waiting on a response.

OUR NEXT STEPS:

Our next steps will be –

- Commence a wide-ranging community information and engagement process, using legacy and social media; leafleting River Rd; and engaging local community groups.
- Obtain final Council approval and commence the search for funding.

WILL YOU SUPPORT THIS PROJECT?

We are not asking for money or time, but know that enthusiastic local support is a vital component of grant funding applications. This is a Community Initiated project to resolve a community issue in the most effective manner. We have a long-standing, annoying, and dangerous access issue, and a well-prepared, community-driven, environmentally positive solution.

Please help us make it happen:

Sign the Petition at blundellswamp.com/raisetheroad or at our Facebook and Instagram pages, to call on the State and Federal Governments to fund this essential and worthwhile project.

Further information:

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