

# Local bush battle

Story Emma Grodzicki

**T**HE Western Sydney Conservation Alliance (WSCA) is challenging Penrith City Council's management of the local environment.

Council recently stated it was at the forefront of conserving important bushland and boosting the City's rich biodiversity.

However, WSCA believes the City is actually going backwards, with controversial planning decisions, poor management of conservation areas and little dedicated resources to bush care all playing a part in its reasoning.

President of WSCA, Geoff Brown, described the Council as pro-development, and fears for the future of the city.

"Council wants Penrith to become the next Parramatta," he said.

"But I couldn't imagine a day in Penrith where you couldn't drive past and see bushland – I don't want to see Penrith turn into Parramatta and I don't think other residents want to go that way either."

Amongst many concerns, WSCA has been critical of the Council's Local Environment Plan, and is currently seeking legal advice as to whether it was made in accordance to the Act.

Mr Brown believes it is un-Australian not to care for the environment and he is hoping to encourage more locals to care for their surroundings.

"We all say we love the bush – let's prove it. I think we need to foster a spirit in the community that protecting the bush is an admirable thing to do – and the leaders of our city need to support it," he said.

A spokesperson for Penrith City Council highlighted that the Council had developed a biodiversity strategy and in the last three years engaged the resources of a full-time Natural Resources Management Officer to implement its biodiversity action plan.

The spokesperson said the Council had a good track record in conserving important bushland, and offered to assist WSCA in encouraging more residents to engage in bush care programs.

"We would love to see more volunteers active in this



*The Western Sydney Conservation Alliance President, Geoff Brown, and Vice President, Wayne Olling, want Penrith City Council to manage the local environment better.*

area, and are happy to work with the Western Sydney Conservation Alliance to develop more Bush care groups across our City as discussed with their representatives at a recent meeting," the spokesperson said.

WSCA is appealing for people to actively help the local environment by getting involved with WSCA and its bush care initiatives. Email [info@wsca.org.au](mailto:info@wsca.org.au) or visit the website [www.wsca.org.au](http://www.wsca.org.au).