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MEDIA RELEASE

Joint Statement from

Cr David Hinchliffe, Deputy Mayor
Cr Helen Abrahams, Chair of Environment & Sustainability
Cr Les Bryant, Richlands Ward & Cr Felicity Farmer, Jamboree Ward.

BRISBANE COUNCILLORS ACT TO PROTECT POOH CORNER

Sunday 17 April

Brisbane Councillors today signaled their intention to take extraordinary steps in support of a community campaign to protect environmentally significant bushland at Wacol.

Deputy Mayor David Hinchliffe and Environment Chairperson Helen Abrahams will propose that Monday's Civic Cabinet meeting recall Council early, to ask Councillors to officially call on the Commonwealth Government to withdraw the 138ha Wacol bushland known as Pooh Corner from tender.

"We will be asking Civic Cabinet to unanimously call the full Council back from recess for an extraordinary meeting," Deputy Mayor David Hinchliffe said.

"We will then be calling on Councillors to speak with one voice, and demand the Commonwealth protect this important piece of Brisbane bushland."

"We are pleading with the Commonwealth Government not to sell Pooh Corner, but to transfer this endangered bushland to Council so it can be permanently protected."

Cr Hinchliffe, who is responsible for planning and development, said Council's planning scheme may not be enough to protect the site.

"Council has classified the whole site for Open Space and Conservation purposes, but we're not confident we can prevent development on the whole site through the Development Application process, as the ultimate decision always rests with the Planning and Environment Court.

"The only way to protect the Pooh Corner bushland and preserve its environmental value is for the Commonwealth to transfer the land to Council, and for Council to resolve to protect it in perpetuity for conservation."

“The environmental values of this site are absolutely undeniable,” Council’s Environment spokesperson Cr Helen Abrahams said.

“Virtually the entire site is covered by endangered vegetation, and it is home to rare and vulnerable fauna like the Grey goshawk, the Masked owl, the collared delma, and a number of kangaroo, glider and wallaby species.

“Three State significant ecological corridors meet at the site,” she said. “It is a critical and irreplaceable part of Brisbane’s environmental heritage.”

Cr Les Bryant of Richlands ward has supported the move.

“I have been approached by a number of members of the development community who have indicated that Pooh Corner is too hard to develop and that they won’t be tendering,” he said.

Neighbouring Councillor Felicity Farmer of Jamboree agreed, and thanked residents for their efforts to protect the site.

“A number of local residents and groups have campaigned vigorously to protect Pooh Corner, and Council should be standing at their side,” she said.

“I call on all my Council colleagues to stand together on this issue.”

The Commonwealth Government’s call for tenders on the site officially closes on 27 April 2005.

Information about the community campaign to save Pooh Corner is available from Friends of Pooh Corner at www.poohcorner.info

More information about the environmental and conservation values of the site is also available on request.

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