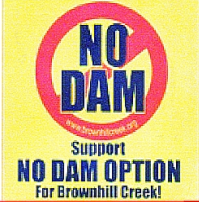

**No Dam
for
Mitcham**



**News
Page**

By
Ron Bellchambers

No Dam Option D Is The Preferred Option!

The *Brown Hill Keswick Creek Stormwater Management Plan: Part B Report* was released too late for a 2014 public consultation, but all five councils voted to receive and note the report, which "recommends Option D - Creek Capacity Upgrade as a preferred technical solution to flood mitigation for properties in upper Brownhill Creek." It was also noted "that the Project on behalf of the five councils (Adelaide, Burnside, Mitcham, Unley and West Torrens) will undertake community engagement relating to 'Part B' Works within the first half of 2015."

The Project clearly details the reasons why Option D is "preferred", in a *News Release* and *Summary Brochure* available at www.brownhillcreek.org and in the full *Part B Report* available at www.bhkcstormwater.com.au.

Comprehensive expert studies, embodied in the technical *Part B Report*, established that Option D "has the lowest capital cost and lowest estimated ongoing maintenance costs"; "provides the required (100 year ARI) level of flood protection"; "satisfies the project councils' endorsed position to give preference to a feasible 'no dam' solution"; "does not require bypass culverts in suburban streets"; "is within the budgeted cost for Part B works" and "preserves existing sites of heritage significance."

A key finding of the report is that the existing urban channel has inadequate capacity and requires upgrading. The essential upgrading and rehabilitation of upper Brownhill Creek is an *environmental* solution for flood mitigation. The *Part B Report*, along with repeated written and verbal assurances by Project representatives, emphasises that NO concrete channel will be constructed through the natural sections of creek owners' backyards or public parks, NO plans exist to bulldoze Brownhill Creek, NO easements will be forced on creek owners and NO land will be lost by creek owners.

As part of an overall creek upgrade, creek rehabilitation works are required across all options, dam or no dam. Creek rehabilitation works involve the removal of rubbish, obstructions and 179 trees that are impeding the critical flow of the creek. According to the Project there will be "re-planting on top of the banks with suitable native vegetation to

ensure the creek is returned as far as possible to an improved and sustainable environment." Selective creek widening is also required on 22 properties across all options, dam or no dam.

No Dam Option D only involves the additional removal and re-planting of 50 *non-significant* trees and the additional widening of the creek on 44 properties, by up to one metre in most cases. This brings the overall total, resulting from a creek upgrade, to 230 trees and 66 properties. The Project is clear that with sensitive re-planting and the restoration of a natural creek bed, native biodiversity and habitat will be improved for our flora and fauna.

In a bizarre twist, some creek owners are threatening a 'class action' "if a plan to bulldoze a 5-kilometre long, 8-metre wide channel through their gardens is approved." The Project has made it clear that NO such plan exists, so this appears to be a 'Clayton's Class Action'. Ironically the spokesperson for this 'legal action group' would have had his backyard bulldozed and concreted under previous flawed plans in 2006, 2011 and 2012. He and his neighbours are arguably better off under the current improved plan!

The *Part B Report* spells out the legal responsibility of creek owners under the *Natural Resources Management Act of 2004*, to maintain their section of creek in 'good condition'. Under the current plan the Project proposes to help creek owners fulfill their legal responsibility by restoring Brownhill Creek to 'good condition'. This will be a *win* for flood mitigation, a *win* for the environment, a *win* for heritage and a cost effective *win* for ratepayers.

The No Dam in Brownhill Creek Community Action Group is now a sub-committee of Brownhill Creek Association Inc. BCA has long term objectives to actively preserve and restore the environment and heritage of Brownhill Creek (urban and rural). Please join with us by becoming a paid member. A BCA membership form with instructions is available at www.brownhillcreek.org.

Regards,
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