



Media release

5 August 2021

Sydney Water's Wolli problem solved

"It smacks of a post-hoc justification for a decision already taken", says Peter Stevens of the Wolli Creek Preservation Society.

He is commenting on an internal Sydney Water report acquired under public access legislation. The redacted report compares two possible sites for an Odour Control Unit (OCU) in the Wolli Valley.

"Sydney Water's Option A puts the OCU within the bounds of the Wolli Creek Regional Park. It would block the Park's completion and hold back half a hectare of remnant bushland from the Park."

"Option B is outside the Park but has been rejected, essentially because it puts the OCU unacceptably close to an adjacent residence. However, that closeness only results from Sydney Water's assumption of an awkward orientation for the OCU on that alternative site."

"Apart from the impact on that residence, Sydney Water's own assessment shows little difference between the two sites, with Option A being the more expensive, but nonetheless preferred."

"Wolli Creek Preservation Society analysis reverses the report's assessment of the relative merits of the two sites. Going further, it has developed a new Option W on the Option B site. This further improves on the advantages of that site, while using Sydney Water's own OCU design layout."

"It does this by a straightforward reorientation of the OCU that increases the distance to the residence five-fold and allows for the installation of a sound barrier and vegetation screening."

"Unfortunately, it seems that Sydney Water is not answerable to any external body other than Water Minister, Melinda Pavey, and even that is in doubt. We want the Minister to ensure that Option W is considered thoroughly and transparently."

"We think that if the reasons we've been given for continuing with Option A are the real ones, then Option W overcomes them and should be adopted."

Background to this release and diagrams showing Options B and W are attached.

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Background to the media release

This is a highly abbreviated version of a timeline about the Sydney Water land in the Wolli Valley and its Odour Control Unit (OCU) proposal. Much that is shorthand or obscure in the [full timeline](#) has been expanded or clarified.

- **1998** Commitment to Wolli Creek Regional Park announced by Coalition Minister for the Environment, Tim Moore.
- **6/2017** WCPS wrote to then Minister for Water, Don Harwin, seeking transfer of Sydney Water land in the Wolli Creek Valley to complete Wolli Creek Regional Park.
- **8/2017** Sydney Water wrote to Unwin St residents (near their land) alerting them to site surveying and geotech investigations for OCU on the western side of their sewer aqueduct. WCPS not informed.
- **12/2018** WCPS wrote to Harwin proposing an alternative site on the eastern side of the aqueduct (no. 22 Unwin St), available via land swap with DPIE
- **10/2019** Sydney Water presented preliminary OCU design to WCPS, WCPS rejected location (Option A), put proposal for acquisition of adjacent residence (20 Unwin St) to overcome problems seen by Sydney Water with alternative site (their Option B).
- **1/2021** WCPS launched petition (over 4,300 at August 2021) to Water Minister, Melinda Pavey, seeking intervention to overturn Sydney Water's location decision; WCPS submitted an application to Heritage NSW for an Interim Heritage Order to prevent OCU construction.
- **31/5/2021** – GIPA request submitted to Sydney Water re criteria, ratings and weightings used in the comparison of Options A and B in Sydney Water's Review of Environmental Factors.
- **19/7/2021** – Sydney Water GIPA officer provides documents – the Site Assessment Technical Note is useful, but the most relevant information sought re comparison of Sydney Water's Options A and B sought is redacted; reasons for redaction sought.
- **28/7/21** – WCPS writes to Minister Pavey with new proposal (Option W) meeting WCPS concerns and overcoming those of Sydney Water with the alternative site. Copies sent to Ministers Kean and Stokes.

This letter and its attachments are linked below

1. [Letter to Minister Pavey and main attachment](#)
2. [Site Assessment Technical Note](#)
3. [WCPS critique of Technical Note](#)
4. [Spreadsheet re rankings and weightings](#)

Option B
Sydney Water's proposal for the alternative site
showing the proximity to No.20 Unwin St and
extra pipework required



Option W
Wolli Creek Preservation Society
revised proposal for the alternative site

