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31 August 2009

Mr. Dave Walker
The General Manager
The Hills Shire Council
129 Showground Rd
CASTLE HILL NSW 2154

Dear Mr Walker,

RE: Proposed High Rope Forest Adventure Course on behalf of Go Ape (Australia)Pty Ltd

Applicant: Adventure Forest Pty Ltd
Location: Ted Horwood Reserve No 144 25Z Park Rd, Baulkham Hills NSW 2153
Excelsior Reserve No 45 Excelsior Avenue, Castle Hill NSW 2154
Bidjigal Reserve No 51 Murray Farm Rd, Carlingford NSW 2118

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) is the State's peak environment organisation. We work closely with 120 member groups, local communities, government and business to ensure a positive future for our environment.

We are concerned to hear from the Bidjigal Reserve Action Group (**BRAG**) of the High Rope Forest Adventure Course proposed for Ted Horwood Reserve, Excelsior Reserve and Bidjigal Reserve. The environmental and ecological risks associated with this development far outweigh its limited, potential environmental gains.

Bidjigal Reserve is described on the Hills Shire Council website as "a place of rugged natural beauty and full of hidden treasures; a time capsule of ancient ecosystems, aboriginal shelters and colonial shelters."¹ Bidjigal Reserve contains over 370 native plant species including 29 different native orchids, endangered ecological communities and rare and threatened species.²

The NCC has significant concerns regarding the proposed development's environmental impacts including; the damage and removal of existing trees and vegetation, noise pollution, the creation of an extensive network of tracks by the proponent, in addition to the projected 30,000 users per year that will have access to this facility.

We are alarmed to learn that this proposal includes the removal of 77 trees and a further 1,730m² of habitat removed or modified, particularly given the number of threatened species known to occur locally that have a direct habitat relationships to the areas proposed to be disturbed.³ These threatened species include:

¹ Baulkham Hills Shire Council, "Bidjigal Reserve", <http://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au/Bidjigal-Reserve.html> accessed 31.08.09

² Baulkham Hills Shire Council, "Bidjigal Reserve", <http://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au/Bidjigal-Reserve.html> accessed 31.08.09

³ Statement of Environmental Effects, Glendinning Mitto & Associates Pty Ltd, pg 30 (2009)

Bynoe's Wattle (*Acacia bynoeana*)
Epacris purpurascens var. purpurascens;
Hibbertia superans;
Eastern Freetail Bat (*Mormopterus norfolkensis*)
Greater Broad-nosed Bat (*Scotanax rueppellii*)

According to the Hills Shire Council website, Australia's largest owl, the endangered Powerful Owl breeds in the Bidjigal reserve. The Statement of Environmental Effects fails not only to address the impact the development will have on this species, but other endangered ecological communities and rare and threatened species, including mammals such as "Echidnas and Sugar Gliders that have become rare"⁴.

The NCC also objects to the fact that under the current proposal the general public and existing users of Ted Horwood Reserve will lose access to the bushland area of this public park. In the proposal some of these areas will be fenced off, restricting access to the general public and recreational users of the park as a result of the High Rope Adventure Course.⁵

The proposal does not address sufficiently how the general public will have access to the areas operated by the proponent and whether the existing users and neighbouring residents will still be able to enjoy passive recreation in these areas. In addition, it isn't made clear whether the area operated by the proponent will only be available for the exclusive use by the proponent or if this area will still be accessible for public recreation.

The NCC believes that the proposed High Rope Forest Adventure Course presents an unacceptable environmental risk to the existing habitat within Bidjigal Reserve. We anticipate that our concerns and the concerns of the Bidjigal Reserve Action Group are taken into account and look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,



Cate Faehrmann
Executive Director

⁴ Baulkham Hills Shire Council, "Bidjigal Reserve", <http://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au/Bidjigal-Reserve.html> accessed 31.08.09

⁵ Statement of Environmental Effects, Glendinning Mitto & Associates Pty Ltd, pg 15 (2009)