

20 May 2026

Via email

Kevin Duckett TfNSW

Tim James MP (Member for Willoughby)

Hugh Phemister (WCC General Manager)

Tanya Taylor (WCC Mayor)

Naremburn Ward Councillors (Georgie Roussac, Nic Wright and Anna Greco)

RE: Destruction of native plants at Artarmon Railway Station on 28-29 March 2026

The Artarmon Progress Association (APA) has been made aware of the mass destruction of native vegetation at and around Artarmon Railway Station.

Our understanding of this serious event is as follows:

- Willoughby City Council planted rows of native Wonga Wonga Vine along the western side of the rail fence as part of the Hampden Rd upgrade in 2023/24. These vines flourished and provided a pleasant backdrop for the gardens as well as a screen from the rail corridor and cover for the unattractive rail fence.
- The project was part of the NSW Public Spaces Legacy Program, which aims to provide high-quality public open space. Improved landscaping was one of several objectives. This work was co-funded by the NSW Government and ratepayers.
- Our understanding is that all species used in the landscaping of Hampden Rd by Council had been approved for use by Transport for NSW (TfNSW).
- In late March, over 250 individual Wonga vines were cut and poisoned by TfNSW contractors with no notification to the local community nor possibly, the Council. They are now all dead and an eyesore for all who use the street.
- This follows a poisoning of numerous rice flower shrubs (again, a native species) within garden beds adjacent to the rail fence several months ago.

On behalf of the residents of Artarmon we have the following questions for Transport for NSW and Willoughby City Council:

Transport for NSW

- Was TfNSW required to seek approval for this clearance work to be done?
- Were local residents and shopkeepers at the Artarmon Village informed this work was to take place? Children are often present in the parkland adjacent to the fence and may have been exposed to the poison.
- When will the dead vines be removed?

Willoughby City Council

- Why were these species planted against the railway fence?
- Did Council approve the poisoning of the native plants?
- When is replanting or landscaping to be undertaken, in what timeframe and at whose cost?

There are other important vegetation related issues which also need to be resolved:

- Invasive weed species (Madeira vine) originating from the corridor side of the fence remain to the north of the station (on the western side).
- There is a proliferation of weeds adjacent to the Wilkes Ave precinct following clearing of the embankment.
- Invasive weeds cloak the trees along Valetta Lane and Elizabeth St (south).
- The rail corridor adjacent to, and to the north and south, of the station (particularly on the eastern side along Valetta Lane and Elizabeth St) is poorly maintained, with trees covered in non-native vines, plus the area is strewn with rubbish.

Local community groups coordinate residents who work hard to improve the quality of landscaping and bush care in the suburb. It is disappointing that the original landscaping adjacent to the railway has had to be destroyed. This works against all the effort, time and money invested in the Artarmon Village streetscape improvements.

Next steps

The APA requests the following:

- A meeting with all stakeholders (TfNSW, Council, APA, concerned residents) to discuss the way forward.
- A landscaping and planting plan for the beds along the railway fence which
 - provides a visual shield and
 - complies fully with TfNSW requirements.
- A plan to remove all invasive species from along the fence and away from the station.
- Removal of invasive weeds from the railway corridor and replacement with native shrubs and ground cover.
- Commitment from TfNSW and Council for on-going maintenance programs in these areas.

Yours sincerely,



Glenda Hewitt

President

Pres@artarmonprogress.org.au

The Artarmon Progress Association, Inc. (APA) was founded in 1906 as a not-for-profit group and our objectives are to promote the welfare, physical and intellectual advancement of the suburb of Artarmon and the City of Willoughby, to protect the interests of the residents, and to encourage a keener spirit of citizenship and mutual help amongst residents. Our newsletter, the Artarmon Gazette, is distributed quarterly to over 5,000 homes and businesses in Artarmon. We regularly communicate with residents and act as a conduit between local residents and elected representatives on matters concerning our local community.