

Dear Emma,

As a resident of North Rothbury I object to the above proposal.

My main concern with the new proposal is the loss of 27.57 ha of open space – especially the loss of 15.03 ha of Riparian corridors. Riparian areas are vital for the stability and health of our local waterways and the future biodiversity of wildlife that finds refuge here.

Part of the Huntlee environmental obligation was to maintain and rehabilitate the Riparian corridors. The current corridors are choked with Rubbish from building sites, and I have not seen any kind of rehabilitation such as native plantings in these corridors. So not only are they not meeting their obligation but they are seeking to destroy more beautiful flora and fauna.

Huntlee cites that there is already conservation reserve in Hanwood managed by a mine as an offset relating to mining expansion activities in the Hunter Valley. But just because a mining company is upholding its local environmental responsibilities does not mean that the Huntlee development should be absolved of all or their responsibility.

Huntlee has fallen short on many promises but this is unacceptable. As a long-time resident of this beautiful area I have witnessed first hand the massive impact this development has had on our wildlife, land and even local climate. Mines are nearby. Army bases are nearby. But never before has the dust pollution, ravaging winds, noise pollution (bombing, trains etc) ever been at the level it has risen to in the past 3 years. Not to mention the insidious decline in native wildlife. A reduction in trees and vegetation means a reduction in the natural barriers that have kept these issues in check in the past.

The proposal from LWP also mentions council's own desire to reduce open space as seen below:

*"Other areas of public open space are provided throughout the site, being utilised in part for stormwater management. The overall reduction in open space areas is considered appropriate noting that Council have previously indicated a preference for less open space due to maintenance costs and associated timeframes with physical maintenance involved"*

The below excerpt is taken directly from your very own Cessnock Council website:

*Biodiversity underpins our quality of life and our livelihoods. We rely on healthy, complex and functioning natural ecosystems to keep our air and water clean, pollinate our crops, grow food and fibre, and help keep pests and diseases in check. Everyone has a role in managing biodiversity.*

It is time for council to stand by it's own words and step up to their role in managing biodiversity.

Also I don't think its appropriate to declare stormwater basin as Public Open Space. Storm water basins are by design hazardous to the general public. However the residents of Huntlee, having limited usable open space and no deliverance on the many park areas Huntlee originally promised, are using these Basins as play areas for their children. Its sad that Cessnock council allow flood-ways to be delegated as play areas for their youngest and most vulnerable constituents.

However I know that regardless of any environmental concerns in the end it comes down to money and economy. Then please consider the tourism this area relies on. People visit Pokolbin Wine Country most often directly through the town of Huntlee via Wine Country Drive. They are not coming here to see vast areas of housing. Nor are they coming just for the wines. Our environment is part of our appeal. In a time where domestic travel is the only way to go our environment is something to invest in. Please manage it better for all our futures.

Regards,