

## **SUBMISSION – HUGH JOHNSON**

Our family has lived at the north-eastern end of the Kanimbla Valley, just below Mount Victoria, since the mid-1970s. As longtime members of the Kanimbla community, we know the surrounding bushland well and have a strong commitment to preserving this (at present) still relatively unspoiled natural environment. Our parents compiled a detailed identification list of flora, some of which are now listed as either threatened or endangered.

In December 2022, officers from NSW Department of Planning and Environment visited our little corner of Kanimbla as part of the Department's 'Save our Species' program. They identified the presence of a rare species of wattle (*Acacia flocktoniae*) now formally classed as threatened. This is one of only three locations where it is confirmed to have survived. This unique species is now being entered into the NSW PlantNet database.

The bushland is also home to the vulnerable Scarlet Robin and established colonies of the endangered Greater Glider. Your report does not identify the presence of these species within the area. Indeed, there is no mention of the possible presence of any vulnerable, threatened or endangered species.

We attended the recent community consultation at Hartley Community Hall, and have studied your online resources about the project. We are particularly concerned that the existing vegetation analysis is grossly inaccurate for our area. For example, cleared paddock is labelled as wet sclerophyll forest, and forested areas are identified as grazing land (vegetation analysis p50 vol 7 appendix N of EIS released January 2023). These serious inaccuracies need to be corrected by expert 'on the ground' analysis to correct and update your analysis of possibly affected vegetation/habitat.

Further, the information appearing in the EIS makes no mention of potential impacts on rare, threatened or endangered species. Based on the satellite photo, vegetation terms/details are either inaccurate or confused. These omissions and inaccuracies do not provide the public with any confidence that planning has been rigorous enough to address the potential threats to our local environment.

A key concern is that the EIS has not thoroughly investigated the potential impact of tunnel construction on existing groundwater systems. The potential impact of deep drilling under the escarpment on groundwater and moisture retention, movement and creek flows could be catastrophic and permanent. Our local creeks (Fairy Bower Creek, Wilsons Gully Creek and our "Urimbirra" Creek) arise at the southern edge of the escarpment, below Fairy Bower/Mount Piddington/Victoria Pass. The creeks flow through both bush and private land and are essential to sustain wildlife, flora, habitat, grazing animals and some household water supplies.

We would warmly welcome future 'boots on the ground' visits by Departmental officers, to clarify and update the EIS to correctly identify the possibly-affected aquifers, habitats and ecosystems we are lucky enough to call home.