

13<sup>th</sup> January, 2013

Major Projects Assessments, Department of Planning and Infrastructure

GPO Box 39

Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Sir / Madam,

In my capacity as Conservation Officer for Birdlife Southern NSW I am concerned that the proposed new highway through Glenugie to Maclean will pass through an area with 337 hectares of endangered ecological communities including the nationally listed Lowland Subtropical Rainforest.

The endangered and critically endangered flora and fauna found in this area cannot be replicated by acquiring hectares of offset vegetation. I have concerns for the survival of the threatened and non threatened species that will lose their habitat and the loss of habitat itself. I have a particular concern for the birdlife that relies on this habitat for survival. The removal of old growth trees will impact on the birds that rely on holes in trees for nesting. A resource which is becoming increasingly problematic for these birds. With 100+ bird species identified in this area it will be devastating to this population to take away their habitat. These species will not relocate to another area successfully. Recent research has identified that some birds cannot cope with relocation. (Bennet, 2012\*) Many of these birds have a threatened status and should be protected not have their habitat destroyed.

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During construction I am concerned that threatened flora communities will be destroyed resulting in their loss to us forever. To ensure that these species are not lost forever have the scientists from the Seedbank been asked to collect seed from all threatened flora in the area? I believe that this needs to be carried out before any construction starts. Has there been monitoring of all fauna in the area and in the offset area to ensure that no fauna will be lost to us?

No amount of offset areas can compensate for the loss of wildlife corridors established by the fauna in this area. When the road is constructed the fauna still in the area will still want to use their corridors which will include the road. this will lead to unacceptable levels of road kill.

At all levels the environmental cost of building the section of road between Glenugie to Maclean is unacceptable and should be reconsidered and rejected by the determining authorities.

There is a viable alternative route which will not impact so drastically on one of Australia's most vulnerable ecological communities.

I therefore call on the determining authorities to reject the Clarence Valley route and adopt the alternative orange option.

Yours faithfully,

Lesley Hook

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\*Bennet et al The anatomy of a failed reintroduction: a case study with the Brown Treecreeper. Emu Vol 112 Issue 4