

To the Hon. Mark Speakman,
Minister for the Environment
NSW Department of Environment & Heritage

Tuesday, 27th October, 2015

Dear Mr Speakman,

On Nov. 4th 2010, we signed a Conservation Agreement with the Minister of Environment at the time, Mr. Rob Stokes, as we thought that our property *Billarimba* could become part of a wildlife corridor and we needed to share the responsibility of protecting the land. We own land on both sides of the Wingecarribee River, west of Berrima.

We are extremely concerned about the impact of the planned Hume Coal mine on this area and on the wildlife protected under this agreement. As you are the current Minister of Environment, we would greatly appreciate your stepping forward to honour the Government's side of the Conservation Partnership for this land and to help us in preventing this mine going ahead.

Billarimba encompasses 91 hectares on both sides of the Wingecarribee River, accessed via Liebman's Road (off Medway Road). Studies have shown that the property is extremely valuable for its flora and fauna, many of which are rare and endangered species — as discovered and recorded in a Conservation Partnership Program Survey.

Rare and endangered species on *Billarimba*

- 1 Kunzea cambagei (plant) — **Vulnerable**, under the Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995
- 2 Eucalyptus aciculate (plant) — Rare or Threatened Australian Plant (ROTAP) 3Rc
- 3 Grevillea Raybournii (plant) — Rare or Threatened Australian Plant (ROTAP) 2KC
- 4 Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby — **Endangered** under the Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995

The property adjoins crown land which links directly to Bangadilly National Park (to the west) and is an active and proven wildlife corridor used by many animals, common and endangered, including koalas (protected under the Threatened and Endangered Species Conservation Act, 1995 and State Environmental Planning Policy No. 44).

Koala sightings on *Billarimba*

There has been evidence of koalas on the property since we took ownership in 1992, including their scats and marks. We had our first sighting of a koala in June 2004 and have had several sightings of them over the last ten years, proving that *Billarimba* is a koala corridor.

- 23 June 2004 — single male koala (photograph available)
- Two sightings of koalas in 2009–2010: (1) a pair just across the Wingecarribee River; (2) a single koala at Macarthur's Crossing.
- 9 August 2014 — single koala (sex not recorded; photograph available)
- 14 November 2014 — single koala (identified as male by koala experts at the National Koala Survey)

It stands to reason that koalas would be living and moving through other Berrima and Medway properties and therefore would be threatened by the mine's establishment and operations also.

Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby sightings on *Billarimba*

Proven habitat for the endangered Brush-Tailed Rock Wallaby as identified in the Conservation Partnership Program Survey (2012) and recorded sighting roughly ten years ago.

The impact of the coal mine would particularly endanger animals that rely on surface and ground water in rivers, creeks and the water table. We ourselves do not have another source of water other than tank water, which would be contaminated by the coal dust from the planned coal loading and washing operations, approximately 3km away. In the last couple of years we've had three different floods in which the Wingecarribee River has broken its banks and dams have overflowed. This suggests that any storage in dams at the mine would not be secure and that the dangerous products of coal washing operations would be likely to end up contaminating creeks and groundwater, as well as the river, which feeds the Sydney Water Catchment and, eventually, drinking water in Sydney. Surely, this cannot be considered an acceptable risk.

This mine will have not only a local impact, but a global one. The species we have in the Berrima area and on *Billarimba* are fauna not only indigenous to Australia but also birds from Russia and Japan, whose health and world populations will be affected by the contaminated drinking, bathing and roosting sites.

In the 23 years we have lived at *Billarimba*, we have discovered the extraordinary wealth of wildlife species that make the place their home — plants and animals. We joined the Conservation Partnership Program in 2010 in order to be able to better protect them.

We hope to hear from you soon.

Mark and Wendy Alexander,
Billarimba
[address withheld]