



CUMBERLAND CONSERVATION NETWORK

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31 July 2017

Office of Planning & Environment
via website address:

http://www.majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=7127

EIS for Proposed Upgrade of The Northern Road from Bringelly to Glenmore Park

This is the submission of Cumberland Conservation Network with respect to the subject matter.

Cumberland Conservation Network laments the continued diminution of Cumberland Plain Woodland (Cumberland Plain Shale Woodlands) and Shale-Gravel Transition Forest - ecological communities listed both in NSW and the Commonwealth as “Critically Endangered”. Those listings ought to prompt a serious attempt to avoid further loss but, no, it is “business as usual” and a determined goal prevails to turn the Cumberland Plain into 'sea of bitumen, brick and concrete'.

Why is it that “Infrastructure” is the god of this age inasmuch as nothing can stand unaffected when proponents of infrastructure determine what line or location they want it to go? Who is there or what is there to withstand this voracious entity?

As things stand, an enmity is growing within the community at the abuse of community concern for the environment in which we live and this will boil over into undesirable scenes one day unless corrected soon.

Against this government agenda we are obliged to seek better than what is proposed albeit not the preservation of the extent of “Critically Endangered” ecological communities proposed for destruction.

Intrusion on Conserved Land

In year 2007 both the Federal Coalition and Federal Labor committed the 1370ha of the Defence Establishment, Orchard Hills (DEOH), listed in the Commonwealth Heritage List for its conservation value, to a conservation future. Penrith City Council then zoned the area E2 Environmental Conservation. This came about after conservationists had lobbied hard for protection of the area. It is worth noting that it was the present Prime Minister, The Hon(?) Malcolm Turnbull, who was first to commit this 1370ha area to a conservation future. Is he now about to show he lied to the public back in year 2007? If so, he must be exposed for what he has done.

What do any utterings or actions of politicians or government toward conservation mean if an infrastructure planner can come along later and decide that conservation areas are the easiest or most economical course for alignment of an infrastructure project? All this with the seeming support of the Prime Minister of the nation who once said the land was to be conserved?

Secretary: Wayne Olling

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It is a disgrace and contempt of the earnest efforts of those fighting to protect our natural heritage when infrastructure planners can be allowed to demonstrate such neglect of environmental responsibility and induce the Prime Minister of the nation to present as a liar. Is this a society which has devolved to rhetoric and hypocrisy about environmental protection one moment and act in the most contemptuous and destructive manner later. This is not conducive to an orderly, peaceful society.

Old Growth Trees

Set back from The Northern Road and separated from it by a vehicle 'lay by' near the northern boundary of the Defence Establishment Orchard Hills (DEOH) are two old growth trees. The trees would date in excess of 100 years old. They consist of various hollows which provide fauna habitat. Cockatoos are often seen making use of these hollows.

Wide scale clearing of trees in the history of the Cumberland Plain has resulted in a deficiency of trees with hollows affording suitable habitat for fauna. It is generally accepted that only when trees approach 100 years of age that they produce hollows of suitable use for fauna. Attempts to redress the deficiency of hollow bearing trees by installation of 'nest boxes' on younger trees is now being proven, through recent research, to be less than successful.

Every effort should be made by environmentally sensitive administrators to plan and approve development and infrastructure which protects hollow bearing trees.

Additionally, trees as old as these we mention existing toward the northern boundary of DEOH have been a landmark and emblem of the natural heritage of the area for longer than many built structures elsewhere which attract heritage protection for their cultural heritage value.

Who can say the number or the notoriety of persons who have traversed The Northern Road beside these trees as the latter formed the landscape appreciated by the travellers and perhaps even provided shelter from sun or rain.

When inhabitants of the Cumberland Plain pursued agricultural and commercial interests or as volunteers for defence or nursing for the nation's call to two World Wars they passed by these trees the very same trees served as silent sentinels – reminders of the home landscape and the natural heritage of the land.

Surely, there is sufficient space in this area of The Northern Road to accommodate the necessary road widening and avoid the removal of these historic trees and the habitat they provide for native fauna?

We appeal to the government to pursue all means to achieve preservation of these trees.

Terrestrial Fauna Movement

Cumberland Conservation Network has long sought establishment of the Cumberland Conservation Corridor – an extended corridor in Western Sydney (see attached map) which provides sufficient space to sustain viable populations of the flora and fauna of the Cumberland Plain, including Macrofauna.

Since 2007, either by one party or the other, the Federal Coalition and/or Federal Labor have financed delivery of the Cumberland Conservation Corridor and the present cumulative total of money committed or spent amounts to more than \$40M.

The Cumberland Conservation Corridor (CCC) is intersected here and there by roads but road

upgrades afford the opportunity to create land bridges or culverts of suitable height to permit safe movement of terrestrial fauna from one part of the CCC to another.

Such an opportunity presents through a land bridge or culvert (which will have to remain blocked until DEOH relocates or permits external access to the conservation zone of its site) to link that section of the CCC coming out of Mulgoa Nature Reserve and ending at the western edge of The Northern Road opposite DEOH.

There is no a direct connection (but it is close) with the DEOH conservation zone with this proposal but we will be proposing that any future development of the DEOH site not zoned E2 Environmental Conservation would accommodate the connection with the conservation zone.

We also do not support the construction of a bike track along the narrow connection back to Mulgoa Nature Reserve or any part of the way there. This would be detrimental to fauna presence and movement and would work against the long ago negotiated conserved area through that area.

We encourage serious consideration of this proposal as a conservation outcome.

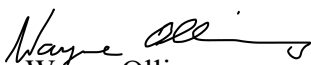
Summary

Cumberland Conservation Network deplores the continued loss of “Critically Endangered” ecological communities and habitat for fauna and all the more so when it comes at the cost of land previously committed to a conservation future by the now Prime Minister of the nation. This should not happen. What was committed to a conservation future by the former Environment Minister and now Prime Minister must remain conserved.

We seek realignment of the proposed widened The Northern Road at the point where the two old growth trees exist near the northern boundary of the DEOH.

We also seek construction of a measure which will, in the future, permit movement of terrestrial fauna, including Macrofauna, between the western edge of The Northern Road (and Mulgoa Nature Reserve further west) and the conservation zone of the DEOH.

In disillusion,



Wayne Olling
Secretary