

## Natalie Mitchell - Fwd: Re Objection to Huntlee New Town Stage 1

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**From:** plan\_comment  
**To:** Natalie Mitchell  
**Date:** 19/04/2011 8:52 AM  
**Subject:** Fwd: Re Objection to Huntlee New Town Stage 1  
**Attachments:** Re Objection to Huntlee New Town Stage 1; Objection to Huntlee New Town Stage 1 MP10-0137; Huntlee New Town Stage 1 Subdivision and Works; Huntlee proposed development, detrimental effect on Hunter Hideaway Cottages

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TO: Director - Strategic Assessment  
 Department of Planning

FROM: Marg McLean  
 PO Box 462  
 Singleton 2330

RE: Huntlee New Town Stage 1 Subdivision and Works

I strongly object to this proposal. It is totally wrong to permit development in areas that require extensive clearing of the precious remnant vegetation of the Hunter Valley floor. There is already an extinction debt in train. The biodiversity of the Hunter Region has been devastated by European occupation for the past 200 hundred years. In the Branxton-Rothbury region, all that remains is dependent on retaining and enhancing the vital habitat provided by the woodland and forest. It is known habitat for 27 threatened species and the Critically Endangered *Persoonia pauciflora*. It is outrageous to consider that half the area of habitat can be destroyed and for the other half to be considered an offset. Precarious populations will not survive the loss of half their habitat. It is a nonsense to consider 'the other half' as compensatory habitat as offset. Loss of local populations leads to loss of species.

The creation of Huntlee conservation areas on and off site has not been determined by conservation planning principles. The bulk of the land proposed to be transferred to DECCW being only the land that Hardie Holdings had happened to have been able to acquire. It does not offset the proposed destruction of the hundreds of hectares of Central Hunter Spotted Gum Ironbark Vegetation community, an Endangered Ecological Community. This community has been more than 70% cleared. The most bottom line biodiversity conservation measure is to remain above the threshold of 70% loss or disturbance; beyond this point there is exponential decline of ecosystem function from a landscape perspective and greatly diminished resilience to stochastic events.

Furthermore, this large area of relatively intact vegetation on the Hunter Valley Floor has a vital connectivity function in to our uncertain future of climate change. The significance of the site as a regional wildlife corridor is irrefutable, acknowledged in the Environmental Assessment but not respected.

The determination of Lower Hunter Regional Strategy (LHRS) included a ranking process according to objective criteria of all the proposed development areas. Department of Planning ranked it last as an appropriate site for development. The inclusion of this site in the LHRS was only due to political interference, not objective planning principles. The article "**Secret files expose the sway of developers**" in the **Sydney Morning Herald, April 12<sup>th</sup> 2008**, used Freedom of Information material to document this travesty.

The Department of Planning needs to accept its responsibility for planning for the greater good in the public interest. This project should not proceed. It is not too late for respectable planning advice to be given and for it to be accepted by this new Minister.

Yours sincerely,  
Marg McLean.