

## Sarah Ng

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**From:** DPE PS ePlanning Mailbox  
**Sent:** Thursday, 1 October 2020 11:55 AM  
**To:** DPE PS Biodiversity Mailbox  
**Subject:** FW: Webform submission from: Draft Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan  
**Attachments:** submission.docx

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**From:** noreply@feedback.planningportal.nsw.gov.au <noreply@feedback.planningportal.nsw.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 30 September 2020 10:11 AM  
**To:** DPE PS ePlanning Mailbox <ePlanning@planning.nsw.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Webform submission from: Draft Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan

Submitted on Wed, 30/09/2020 - 10:08  
Submitted by: Anonymous  
Submitted values are:  
Submission Type: I am making a personal submission  
First Name: Ellie  
Last Name: Robertson  
Name Withheld: No  
Email: [REDACTED]  
Suburb/Town & Postcode: Holsworthy  
Submission file:  
[submission.docx](#)

Submission: I have attached my submission as a document as well. I write to object to the Cumberland Plains Conservation Plan proposal for many reasons. Below are the reasons why I object. Following are the key changes that need to be done to the proposed developments. I object to: 1. Total land to be cleared/developed = 10,470 hectares. 2. Total endangered ecosystems destroyed = 1,780 ha. 3. Total Cumberland Plain Woodland destroyed = 1,014 hectares. 4. Proportion of Cumberland Plain Woodland ecosystem destroyed = >10%. 5. Area of wildlife habitat to be isolated by roads/development = 12,807 ha. 6. Proportion of the Cumberland Plain region to be isolated = 59%. 7. Endangered species impacted = Unknown little/no survey. 8. Total funding offered (developer contributions) = \$84 M instalment total unknown. 9. Total offsets required = 5,475 hectares. 10. Cumberland Plain Woodland offsets required = 3,170 hectares. 11. Aboriginal sites destroyed (total) = Unknown little/no survey. 12. Aboriginal burial grounds destroyed = At least 2. 13. Homes to be evicted for development = At least 20. 14. Homes to be evicted for reserves(developers offsets) = At least 30. 15. Existing National Park land destroyed = >84 hectares. 16. Existing Conservation/Restoration areas destroyed = At least 8. KEY CHANGES REQUIRED AS A MINIMUM TO PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS o Protect a 500 m wide koala corridor at Mount Gilead o Tunnel 2 km to save Wianamatta Regional Park o Extend the Camden Tunnel 4 km south and 6 km north – saving EMAL-to-Razorback Wildlife Corridor, Cobbitty Hills & homes o Clearing 10% of the entire Cumberland Plain Woodland ecosystem is unacceptable KEY CHANGES REQUIRED TO PROPOSED OFFSETS o Protect the Cumberland Conservation Corridor within the Strategic Conservation Area (SCA) o Allow smaller lots to be eligible for offsetting (SCA) and improve offset funding accordingly o Create new, large public reserves of Cumberland Plain Woodland (CPW) to offset loss of CPW in three National Parks o Restore the focus of offsets to Cumberland Plain Woodland – the ecosystem most impacted by these developments o I object to landowner-specific exclusions in the SCA SCRAP THE FAILED 'AVOIDED LAND' model (E2 ZONING & CREEKS) o CPCP riparian corridors and small bushland parcels are left in no-mans-land, neither developed nor conserved as offsets o The Western Sydney Growth Centres program shows that this model fails – no agency wants to own or manage the unfunded creek corridors, and landowners on E2 zoned lands (left ineligible as offsets) illegally clear bushland o Scrap the 'avoided' category – land in development precincts should either be developed or fully funded as an offset. • ADEQUATE BUDGET LOCKED IN UP-FRONT: The CPCP must lock in a sufficient budget up-front to ensure offsets are actually delivered, as per the \$540 M Western Sydney Growth Centres offset program • STAGING DEVELOPMENT TO MATCH DELIVERY OF OFFSETS: The CPCP must stage development and require the satisfactory delivery of offsets from each stage before further development proceeds (as per the Western Sydney Growth Centres) • NO PUBLIC LAND FOR DEVELOPER OFFSETS: Stop the CPCP using loopholes in NSW law to relabel existing public reserves as offsets for developers. This denies us new green spaces and denies farmers funding to conserve bushland on their land. There must be NO offsets created on existing public reserves of any kind. • NEW CONSERVATION RESERVES, NOT PLANTING: The CPCP tries to cut developers costs by replacing the requirement for new conservation areas with tree planting on waste land (The Confluence). Research demonstrates that neither traditional nor scalp-and-seed revegetation compensates for clearing Cumberland Plain Woodland. We need to save the woodlands that remain, not plant seedlings. • NO TAXPAYER SUBSIDY OF DEVELOPER OFFSETS I would also like to have the following questions and issues that I have raised addressed publicly please. 1. Can you explain why the draft CPCP doesn't incorporate the recommendations for habitat protection for the koalas in the Chief Scientist's report? 2. Can you explain why the Wilton Priority Growth Area does not reflect recommended habitat koala corridors of the Chief Scientists Report? 3. Western Sydney Dry Rainforest is under threat in razorback due to spoil from WestConnex and NorthConnex being dumped on once

pristine farm and environmentally-sensitive habitats. NSW government is supporting the destructive activity, despite the efforts of locals and Wollondilly Council. 4. 26% or almost a third of the koala habitat identified by the DPIE will be impacted by the development. Why is this acceptable when the land is supporting the only expanding and healthy koala population in NSW? Only 6% of the critically endangered Cumberland Plains Woodlands still exist. The Cumberland Plain was declared a "first priority" offset for previous biodiversity offset programs for the North West and South West Growth Centres. 5. There was no consultation with Friends of Ropes Creek North, St Marys. 6. Why is there no development considered on already cleared or disturbed areas? 7. Why has connectivity not been considered? Wianamatta Regional Park will be cut in two. 8. Lend Lease have had Stage 1 of their development approved and looking at their plans they have nominated the smallest corner of their development for bio diversity offset. Can you please advise the reasoning behind Lend Lease development not providing any biodiversity offset and why their Stage 1 and Stage 2 development has not been considered within the Draft Plan? 9. Why would there be amendments overtime if land is identified as necessary to be conserved? 10. Will the proposed SEPP be exhibited and be subject to consultation prior to its gazettal? 11. The former OEH report on conserving the Campbelltown and Wollindilly Koalas ignored the peer review report by Stephen Phillips? He said the east west movement corridors should be protected. His view was supported by the Chief Scientist's report. Both of these opinions seem to have been ignored in the draft CPCH. Why? 12. South creek and Wianamatta Regional Park are current corridors and refuges and they will be hit hard by this plan and going to be decimated with a road planned to zig zag it and constructed over only bushland areas. 13. Revegetation is not an answer to clearing of Cumberland plain woodland. 14. The CPCP has produced multiple zones for koala corridor which has random sections of land approved for development cutting through these corridors! How does that make any sense? 15. Land on or near Gilead is where the most important east-west koala corridor is located. It's the fastest and easiest route for the koalas between the Georges and Nepean rivers. 16. There have been landholders that have purchased land specifically for the environmental values that will be affected by this plan. 17. The \$84 million is not nearly enough money to do as the plan says - previous growth plans have had a healthy budget - why not now? 18. Will the draft CPCP be revised based on submissions / feedback by community groups, residents and environment groups criticising the lack of east-west koala corridors as recommended by the Chief Scientist's report?

URL: <https://pp.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/draftplans/exhibition/draft-cumberland-plain-conservation-plan>

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#### **KEY CHANGES REQUIRED AS A MINIMUM TO PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS**

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- o Clearing 10% of the entire Cumberland Plain Woodland ecosystem is **unacceptable**

#### **KEY CHANGES REQUIRED TO PROPOSED OFFSETS**

- o Protect the Cumberland Conservation Corridor within the Strategic Conservation Area (SCA)
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- o Create new, large public reserves of Cumberland Plain Woodland (CPW) to offset loss of CPW in three National Parks
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- o I object to landowner-specific exclusions in the SCA

## **SCRAP THE FAILED 'AVOIDED LAND' model (E2 ZONING & CREEKS)**

- o CPCP riparian corridors and small bushland parcels are left in no-mans-land, neither developed nor conserved as offsets
- o The Western Sydney Growth Centres program shows that this model fails – no agency wants to own or manage the unfunded creek corridors, and landowners on E2 zoned lands (left ineligible as offsets) illegally clear bushland
- o Scrap the 'avoided' category – land in development precincts should either be developed or fully funded as an offset.

- **ADEQUATE BUDGET LOCKED IN UP-FRONT:** The CPCP must lock in a sufficient budget up-front to ensure offsets are actually delivered, as per the \$540 M Western Sydney Growth Centres offset program
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- **NO PUBLIC LAND FOR DEVELOPER OFFSETS:** Stop the CPCP using loopholes in NSW law to relabel existing public reserves as offsets for developers. This denies us new green spaces and denies farmers funding to conserve bushland on their land. There must be NO offsets created on existing public reserves of any kind.
- **NEW CONSERVATION RESERVES, NOT PLANTING:** The CPCP tries to cut developers costs by replacing the requirement for new conservation areas with tree planting on waste land (The Confluence). Research demonstrates that neither traditional nor scalp-and-seed revegetation compensates for clearing Cumberland Plain Woodland. We need to save the woodlands that remain, not plant seedlings.
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The Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan (CPCP) is a plan to replace the standard rules which require developers to set aside land for conservation and instead to replace these rules where there will be approvals of all the largest development proposals in Sydney's west including the Gilead-to-Appin housing estates, M9 Orbital freeway and the corporate agriculture precinct surrounding Western Sydney Airport.

The developments included in the CPCP will clear 10,470 hectares of land and destroy more than 10% of the entire Cumberland Plain Woodland ecosystem.

They will also permanently isolate koalas from much of SouthWest Sydney, destroy Aboriginal burial grounds, and force more than 50 residents from their homes.

The CPCP will replace developer's legal requirements to compensate for ('offset') this damage.

I lament the continued diminution of Cumberland Plain Woodland. Ecological communities listed both in NSW and the Commonwealth as "Critically Endangered".

These 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 insomuch 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?

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, 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?

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.

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?

I 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 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 direct connection with the DEOH conservation zone with this proposal. Any future development of the DEOH site not zoned E2 Environmental Conservation should accommodate the connection with the conservation zone.

I 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.

There must be serious consideration of this proposal as a conservation outcome.

### **Summary**

I deplore 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.

There needs to be a 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 and 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.

Ellie Robertson



Holsworthy NSW 2173

30 September 2020