

Submission on **the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan, (CPCP)**

I object to **the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan, (CPCP)** on the basis, inter alia, that it fails to provide adequate protection to the South West Sydney koala population, which we know is of great value given the precarious state of koala populations in NSW generally.

The Cumberland Plain is home to the largest koala population in Greater Sydney and one of the only chlamydia-free populations in NSW. This unique region also contains 100 threatened or migratory animal and plant species, 680 kilometres of waterways including three water catchment areas and 68 hectares of wetlands of national importance.

Conserving koalas in the Wollondilly and Campbelltown Local Government Areas requires 8,293 hectares. The proposed Georges River Koala Reserve will eventually set aside 1,885 hectares to protect the north-south primary habitat corridor and an additional 610 hectares of habitat. This falls far short of securing all of the primary, secondary and tertiary koala habitat corridors.

The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces Rob Stokes describes the Plan "as one of the largest strategic conservation planning exercises ever... and a once-in-a-generation commitment to protect south-west Sydney's rich environmental assets and important koala population while providing certainty for investment in a growing part of Sydney." The Plan, however, falls short of meeting this goal and will not adequately protect the koalas for the following reasons.

The Plan

- is proposing massive urban development in a subregion that has been previously designated as a "first priority" biodiversity offset area;
- will release a total of 10,014 hectares of rural land for urban redevelopment while setting aside only 5,475 hectares of native vegetation in new conservation lands;
- will impact 1,014.6 hectares or almost 16% of the critically endangered Cumberland Plain Woodland;
- fails to set aside enough land to properly protect the koala population;
- lacks emphasis on adequately protecting koala habitat for a healthy and expanding population is both shocking and surprising because recent events have decimated the state's koala populations;
- provides no assessment about how the loss of so much rural land will impact the Sydney region's food bowl capacity;
- acknowledges that the urban heat island effect in Western Sydney "will increase as urbanisation increases, " but measures to mitigate its impact are minimal;
- lacks a firm commitment to the amount of land to be protected and acknowledges that conservation land will be secured slowly over time;
- only commits to the creation of one reserve - the Georges River Koala Reserve;
- does not accept the Chief Scientist's recommendation to secure all of the east-west habitat corridors for the koalas;
- has not adopted a holistic planning approach to protecting the South West Sydney koalas;

- proposes construction of 120 km of Koala exclusion fencing which will isolate and fragment an expanding and thriving koala population;
- only includes limited measures to mitigate the effects of climate change on wildlife; and
- does not address the significant adverse impact on the scenic, historic and physical qualities of this unique landscape.

In summary

I object to the Cumberland Plains Conservation Plan as a model for future development planning generally. The draft Plan should be withdrawn and redeveloped using the framework of ecological sustainable development.

Specifically in regard to koalas, I strongly urge:

- Use of all available evidence to address the shortcomings of the Plan's koala conservation measures; and
- Protection of a 500 m wide koala corridor at Mount Gilead.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Mr Kim Wagstaff



Oatley NSW 2223