

I wish to make a submission to the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan (CPCP)

I understand that this proposed plan sets aside a large area for urban growth for housing and roads over the next 36 years. However, this leaves only 6% of the Cumberland Plain Woodland. The total endangered ecosystems destroyed will be 1,780 hectares. The total Cumberland Plain Woodland destroyed will be 1,014 hectares and two Aboriginal burial grounds will be destroyed.

While the conservation values of the entire region are assessed, using a combination of an environment protection zoning, new reserves, biobanking and offsets to attempt to conserve some native bushland in response to the defined development, natural values outside the urban growth area are only to be considered by local councils to avoid or minimise impact.

What is needed is a comprehensive plan, not a piecemeal one. The State Government has an opportunity to protect key natural areas across the entire region. I would encourage government to enact enduring protection to prevent future development, beyond the current growth area.

There are impacts on habitat connectivity. The plan will permanently isolate three of the four National Parks which currently protect significant areas of Cumberland Plain Woodland. These are the Wianamatta Regional Park, Shanes Park, and Colebee Nature Reserve. The CPCP M7 motorway and M7-Ropes Crossing Link Road proposals would completely isolate these three reserves from each other. Instead it would be preferable to tunnel 2 km to save Wianamatta Regional Park and to extend the Camden Tunnel 4 km south and 6 km north - saving EMAI-to-Razorback Wildlife Corridor, Cobbitty Hills.

While the plan says "it expects that around 11,000 hectares, or approximately double the Plan's offset commitment of 5,475 hectares of impacted native vegetation, will be protected within new conservation lands", there is no assurance this will be achieved.

While three new reserves are proposed (Georges River Koala; and Gulguer and Confluence still to be subject to feasibility study) they are only completed over the life of the Plan and should be preserved within the next 3 years, otherwise the Plan can be watered down over time in the face of development pressure.

There is a need to increase funding by five-fold with the priority for purchase of bushland for permanent protection. Monies for revegetation programs should be reallocated to conservation and the programs deferred until existing habitat is conserved. No development should occur until adequate protection of native vegetation is assured. Offsets are not the way to go, but are being proposed to be used from anywhere in NSW if local areas are not available. This is a recipe for local extinction. Also, it should prohibit offsets using existing conserved land.

The Plan fails to implement the number of and wide width of east-west Koala corridors recommended by the Chief Scientist. This is unacceptable.