

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan. I would like to make the following brief statements.

There is a need to retain what is left of the Cumberland Plain woodland and vegetation in all areas, including in infrastructure and transport corridors, nominated growth areas and another new developments and housing estates. There is not enough of the critically endangered Cumberland Plain vegetation left for all of these areas to be cleared. Impacts on areas of high biodiversity and ecological value should be avoided as much as possible.

Estates and developments should be planned around existing woodland and vegetation. It is important for new residents to have a connection to the land and waterways that were there before - rather than it being cleared, re-sculpted, reimagined waterways constructed, and new trees and shrubs planted.

Areas of remnant bushland should be reconnected to provide corridors. It is essential to reconnect remaining reserves and pockets of vegetation especially for wildlife and preservation of the koala population.

Old growth trees should be retained. New trees cannot replace decades of tree growth, and wildlife would be severely affected in the time between planting and mature growth.

Replanting should only be used as a last resort if trees and vegetation must be cleared. It should not be a practice used just for convenience, or to maximise developments.

The Cobbitty Hills north of the Outer Sydney Orbital tunnel entrance is a sizeable area of high-quality Cumberland Plain woodland. It makes sense to extend the proposed tunnel up to Greendale Rd to preserve this important area. It would also be desirable to extend the tunnel southwards to avoid woodland in the Menangle area. These extensions would preserve the connections between important wildlife corridors.

There needs to be greater transparency about offsetting procedures. This is difficult for the average person to understand, and it often appears developers simply outlay a relatively small amount of money to knock down many trees. Offsets should be in locations that were not otherwise going to be preserved and not on land that was already a public reserve. Offsets should only be from nearby and similar areas.

More public reserves and national parks should be made in the Camden area. There has been much clearing and much new development, yet there are very few public nature reserves in the area.

The remaining woodland in the Camden LGA should be recognised and protected.

The plan should ensure impacts to threatened ecological communities, species and their habitat are minimised wherever possible.

Damaged areas of woodland should be restored wherever possible.

Accurate assessment and mapping of the Cumberland Plain woodland is needed.

Small landholders should be encouraged and compensated for preserving remnant bushland on their properties.

More community awareness of the Cumberland Plain and its unique flora and fauna is much needed.

Asset protection zones required to protect property from bush fire risk should not encroach on areas that are meant to be preserved.

Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from the impacts of neighbouring developments.

All developments including those in nominated growth areas and transport corridors should have full flora and fauna assessments.

It is hoped that sufficient funding will be provided to ensure preservation of the Cumberland Plain Woodland is not hindered by lack of funds.

I trust that this process will lead to improved outcomes for the Cumberland Plain woodland and its preservation. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this very important aspect of the future of Western Sydney.

Yours sincerely

Jo O'Brien