



OUT20/11530

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Green and Resilient Places Division
Locked Bag 5022
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

Dear Sir/Madam,

Submission to Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan (CPCP).

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) Agriculture is committed to the protection and growth of agricultural industries, and the land and resources upon which these industries depend.

DPI Agriculture has reviewed the documentation on exhibition with the CPCP and has concerns with some aspects of the plan.

It is noted that the CPCP identifies areas of rural zoned land which appears to be cleared of significant native vegetation and used for agricultural purposes as either avoided land or strategic conservation area (SCA). This includes land on the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (EMAI) site.

Agricultural land is a finite resource and is critical for the food security of the Greater Sydney Region and the State. The value of agricultural production in the Greater Sydney Region is over \$645M (2015-16). The vast majority of this agricultural production comes from the rural zoned land in the Metropolitan Rural Area.

Rural land which does not contain extant native vegetation should not be mapped as a strategic conservation area or as avoided land as it has the potential to restrict expansion of agricultural industries or deter land owners from actively farming or managing the land for agricultural purposes.

Rural land which is not properly and actively managed has the potential to be a biosecurity risk for both the agricultural industry in the area and land which has been set aside under a biodiversity stewardship agreement. This would undermine commitments 16, 17 and 19 of the CPCP. It can also pose an increased risk for fire management which would be contrary to commitment 18 of the CPCP.

It is noted in the documentation on public exhibition that approximately 10,000 hectares of the SCA is cleared land and 18,300 contains native vegetation. Given the goal of the CPCP is an offset area of 11,000ha, which can easily be accommodated within the area of land already containing native vegetation it is not considered necessary to include the 10,000ha of cleared land in the SCA.

Additionally DPI Agriculture objects to the entirety of the EMAI site being mapped as SCA. Those areas of the site which do not contain extant native vegetation should be excluded from the SCA.

EMAI is NSW's premier quarantine and biosecurity facility with critical infrastructure and world recognised research scientists. Those parts of EMAI which are cleared of native vegetation and used for agricultural purposes are critical to agricultural research programs to benefit agricultural industries across the state and the country. The agricultural land on EMAI is also subject to commercial contracts which rely on its continued use for agriculture.

The EMAI facility already experiences land use conflict and trespass from new residential development which has encroached into the rural landscape. Identifying the site as a SCA will give the false expectation that the agricultural use of the land will cease and it will be used for environmental conservation purposes.

Should you require clarification on any of the information contained in this response, please contact Paul Garnett, Agricultural Land Use Planning Officer, on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Kate Lorimer Ward
Deputy Director General, Agriculture
Department of Primary Industries – Agriculture

13 October 2020