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Hawkesbury Environment Network
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21st September, 2020

The Hon. Rob Stokes MP

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

Dear Rob

Hawkesbury Environment Network HEN is based in the Hawkesbury LGA and has environmental concerns and interests in the Greater Western Sydney region as well as for the whole of the Hawkesbury/ Nepean Basin. The Cumberland Plain forms an integral part of this region.

HEN has grave concerns for the health of the Cumberland Plain if the NSW Planning Department's Plan for the region goes ahead in its current form.

The proposed clearing of more than 10% (or 1,014 hectares) of the entire Cumberland Plain Woodland ecosystem is unacceptable as so much of this rare and endangered woodland has already been cleared for housing development, shopping centres, roads and Federal Government (ADI) use in the past. HEN understands that 12,807 ha of wildlife habitat will be fragmented and isolated by roads and development in the region. 84 ha of existing National Park land will be destroyed if the Plan goes ahead.

HEN is opposed to the proposed M9 route through Wianamatta Regional Park which is already a biodiversity offset (making a mockery of offsets). This road would take away land which the community currently enjoys for recreation and which contains ecologically endangered woodland. HEN suggests a tunnel under this Park as a possible solution. All offsets should be new, and existing public reserves should not be used as offsets.

It is also unacceptable to HEN to remove the South Creek Bushland Corridor which is currently public reserve. The health of South Creek is very important to the Hawkesbury as it enters the Hawkesbury River at Windsor where it is seriously polluted. Removal of any bushland around any part of South Creek will have an additional detrimental effect on itself and on the Hawkesbury River. HEN feels strongly that additional riparian zones should be provided and protected all along South Creek. Additionally, the proposed South Creek M9 route would bulldoze two Darug burial grounds, an unacceptable outcome to local indigenous people and others concerned with heritage and environment.



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The EPBC Act Offset Guidelines require offsets to reflect the nature of the impact and for this reason HEN would like to see conservation rather than revegetation used as developer offsets. Remnant Cumberland Plain Woodland should be saved for conservation - there is little enough left already. The Cumberland Conservation Corridor (CCC) needs to be included within the Strategic Conservation Area (SCA) for best protection and linkages of bushland corridors, including the Gilead Koala Corridor. This is something which both Federal and State governments support.

Yours sincerely

Jocelyn Howden
Vice-chair

Christine Watson
Secretary