

Sarah Ng

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 1 November 2020 2:25 PM
To: DPE PS Biodiversity Mailbox
Subject: Submission: Draft Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan opposition

To Whom it may Concern:

Living in the Wilton precinct, I would find it laughable that land in our street is being rezoned to preserve the natural environment, if it wasn't for the worry and upset I've seen first hand, of the affected landowners. Since moving to Wilton Park Road – an area with a long, documented history as predominantly established pastoral land - I have regularly seen almost every common feral animal of Australia (foxes, goats, cats, rabbits, deer, Myna birds, sparrows, pigeons, rats), not to mention huge numbers of introduced weed species.

Wilton Park Road's remaining bushland also attracts another type of unwelcome pest, in the form of P Plate drivers and their carload of passengers who travel to the end of the street to drink, take drugs, vandalise and litter. Keeping the area closed up is only going to give them continued sanctuary to perform these activities.

The remaining bushland in this area is so compromised by the action of weeds, feral animals and humans over decades, to have minimal value as a refuge for native plants and animals. From what I've seen whilst living here, the number and diversity of these remaining native species is few. Being surrounded by the Hume Highway and Picton Road, native animals that do live in the area are regularly hit on these roads. To plan to protect (and subsequently, possibly increase) the numbers in this small area feels poorly thought out, and increases the danger to both the animals and humans travelling through.

The Cumberland Plain Plan feels 150 years too late for this area and presents as a desktop exercise, unsupported by real data and common sense, which is why I support the other Plan being lauded for the area – the Wilton 2040 Plan.

Wilton, in general, is not being used effectively for agriculture / food growing for our increasing population – but has many points making it suitable for housing families. If the Wilton 2040 Plan proceeds, the growth will help the local community with local employment - a life changing prospect – as well as positioning housing in an area that is currently being largely wasted, hopefully allowing other areas (take a drive towards Wollongong and see the actual, preserved bushland and established koala colonies in the water catchment areas) to remain a refuge and continue to receive funding to preserve them, such as the recent koala fence that has been erected.

The two Plans – the Cumberland Plain and Wilton 2040 - appear to oppose each other, giving rise to a feeling of unease with the NSW planning process. An E2 area, with its resulting bush fire risk, running alongside an area marked for future urban development seems dangerous and poorly thought out. Even if Wilton 2040 doesn't proceed, and the E2 rezoning does, then I'll still be living here and ask that you can respond to this question - what plans are in place to mitigate the increased fuel load (and increased fire risk) from the E2 rezoned properties that will affect my bush fire preparedness and safety in the case of a fire?

In addition to the above, which I have tried to keep emotion free, and based on observations, evidence and risk assessment, it must be stated that the Cumberland Plain Plan has had an effect on the way the local community feels. Personally, I am horrified that it is even legal to enforce a rezoning that will spectacularly affect the operation, and future sale value, of what is in most peoples' case their main asset, without detailed discussion and agreement around compensation. Apparently the Cumberland Plain Plan has been worked on for two years, with the website boasting 'early engagement with key stakeholders'... yet the actual landowners who will feel the direct impact have only been informed two months ago. The lack of trust we are all feeling, is furthered by the fact we received a letter some time back – unfortunately I had no idea at the time the potential for change it held, and did not keep it – requesting we allow personnel to perform an ecological review on our property. We now assume this was a step in the preparation of the Plan. Absolutely no mention of 'why' they wanted to do this in the letter – but if the preparation of the Cumberland Plain Plan truly was an open, transparent process, I would have expected some mention in the letter.

Whilst my property is not directly affected by the proposed rezoning, as stated above, the repercussions of this event reach further into the community. Please accept this Submission as opposition to the Draft Cumberland Plain Plan and respond to my concerns above.

Best regards

