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Thursday, 19 July 2007

The Hon Mark Vaile MP  
Minister for Transport and Regional Services  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

**Re: Conservation of Air Services Australia land in Greenway**

Dear Minister,

The Western Sydney Conservation Alliance (WSCA) writes to alert you to our concern for the adequate conservation of endangered vegetation at the 558 hectare Air Services Australia site at Shanes Park which is located in Louise Markus's Western Sydney seat of Greenway.

WSCA consists of environment groups from across Western Sydney concerned about the never ending loss of endangered Cumberland Plain bushland which is habitat for a diversity of native flora and fauna.

As you would be aware the NSW Government has massive Growth Centres planned for urban and industrial development in the north west and south west of Sydney (180,000 houses, 2500 ha of employment land). Conservation plans for these areas show that 1900 hectares of endangered bushland will be cleared. The NSW Planning Minister has now zoned the entire ASA Shanes Park site for conservation under its Sydney Growth Centres SEPP (The ASA site is within the North West Growth Centre). This zoning of Shanes Park by the NSW Government significantly devalues the land as the site now has no development potential. If the site is eventually de-commissioned then its sole purpose is for conservation.

And this essentially is our request, that the Federal Government recognise that the entire Shanes Park site has significant conservation values and that those conservation values will be protected in perpetuity. WSCA believes that at some stage in the future ownership of the entire site should be transferred to the NSW Government so it can be added to their National Parks Reserve System.

WSCA believes in the face of the mass development proposed by the NSW Government that there is an urgent need to secure the best remnants of bushland in Western Sydney so that their conservation values are protected in perpetuity.

WSCA is trying to get cooperation from all levels of Government to recognise the need to create a massive 30 km conservation corridor across a large area of outer Western Sydney. We have called this area the 'Cumberland Conservation Corridor' (CCC). Two of the key sites needed to create the CCC are Commonwealth owned. The ASA site at Shanes Park is one and the other is the Dept of Defence owned 1970 hectare Orchard Hills Defence Establishment within Jackie Kelly's marginal seat of Lindsay. 1370

hectares of Orchard Hills is Commonwealth Heritage listed and it is this area we want added to the CCC.

WSCA met with Jackie Kelly, Louise Markus, Pat Farmer and Alan Cadman in June to alert them to the need to create the CCC. We asked for a Federal Government commitment that the entire Shanes Park site and at least the 1370 hectare RNE listing of the Orchard Hills site be dedicated to conservation and the formation of the CCC. We were given a commitment at that meeting by these MP's that they would lobby the Environment, Defence and Transport Ministers to seek the conservation of these sites. We are yet to hear any feedback or commitment from these MP's or from your Department.

WSCA will be embarking on a media campaign in the lead up to the Federal Election to highlight the urgent need to create the CCC in order to protect some of the best bushland remnants from future mass housing. We will be informing the public that the Federal Government owns Orchard Hills and Shanes Park which are the key sites needed to create the CCC.

We will be urging the public to call on the Howard Government to:

- 1) Commit that no Heritage listed areas of these sites will ever be developed and that they remain in public ownership;
- 2) That in the near future ownership of these conservation areas be transferred to the NSW Government to become part of their reserve system as occurred with RNE listed bushland at the St Marys ADI Site.

Minister rest assured that we will be raising these same issues with the Federal Shadow Ministers and their local candidates in Lindsay and Greenway.

WSCA would be happy to work with relevant representatives from your Department in relation to the matters raised in this letter. We would be more than happy to meet to discuss the ASA Shanes Park site. I can be contacted directly on **0431 222602**. I thank you for your time and consideration of these important matters.

Yours truly,



Geoff Brown  
President  
Western Sydney Conservation Alliance