

Western Sydney Conservation Alliance Inc.

Saving our Natural Heritage



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The Hon. Michael Daley MP
Minister for Roads
Governor Macquarie Tower
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Dear Minister,

Removal of Road Reservation from Heritage Site Shane's Park, Western Sydney

The NSW Government is facing a crisis of credibility concerning the road reservation for the once planned Castlereagh Freeway.

The reservation passes through the 560ha International Radio Transmitting Station site, Shane's Park and, if activated, will necessitate the excising of almost ten percent of the site. Further, all the area that would be destroyed is bushland that is listed in the Register of the National Estate for its natural heritage value.

In year 2006, the NSW government declared that the 560ha International Radio Transmitting Station site, Shane's Park, would be the central plank in the government's conservation initiative for the North-West Growth Centre. Further, all decisions for the destruction of bushland elsewhere in the North-West Growth Centre are formulated upon the conservation initiative pertaining to the entire Shane's Park site.

Therein lies the credibility crisis for the government. How can it be that, on the one hand, it has declared the conservation importance of the entire site while, on the other hand, be planning to destroy almost ten percent of it for a road?

The world has moved on since the Castlereagh Freeway route was first devised. Ecological communities are far less represented on the Cumberland Plain. The ecological community extant in the area of the road reservation on the Shane's Park site is listed as endangered and certain species of flora and fauna are now listed as vulnerable or endangered. As already indicated the area of the road reservation on the site is now listed in the Commonwealth Government's Register of the National Estate for its natural heritage value. Both the NSW Dept of Planning and the Dept of Environment and Climate Change have made plans for the entire site to be conserved. The Commonwealth Government and the Dept of Environment and Climate Change are in negotiation about handover of the entire site to the NSW government for management as a conservation site.

WSCA seeks the abandonment of the remaining road reservation for the once proposed Castlereagh Freeway route west of the M7 Motorway but, if the government cannot bring itself to act in the short term on the abandonment, immediate steps be taken to re-route the road reservation to pass outside the northern boundary of the International Radio Transmitting Station site, Shane's Park. The land to the north of the site, Clydesdale, is due for housing development in the North-West Growth Centre Plan and a buffer zone will exist between the two sites. Let that buffer zone be the road reservation.

In financial and practical terms it is in the best interests of the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) to pursue the alternative road reservation we propose because:

- a) There is considerably less flora and fauna loss and therefore less compensatory acquisitions required at a later stage by the RTA.
- b) Depending on when the more destructive option is acted upon, there may be little or no suitable sites available for purchase as offsets.
- c) Our proposed alternate route is a straighter route from the M7 Motorway and therefore less costly.

Immediate attention is required to consider the alternate option we propose because the NSW Government is presently working on the draft Precinct Plan for the Marsden Park Industrial Estate. This is an area through which the alternate route must pass. WSCA has not been late in pursuing this crisis with the government. We raised it with the Growth Centres Commission more than twelve months ago and in subsequent meetings with DECC. It was raised in a meeting with the Environment Branch of the RTA in February, this year, again in a meeting at the Parramatta office of the RTA in April, this year, and, finally, in a meeting with the Growth Centres Commission this month.

The international Radio Transmitting Station site, Shane's Park is part of the greatest conservation initiative the NSW Government can be involved in in Western Sydney - the Cumberland Conservation Corridor - which is well on its way with a commitment of 1370ha of the Orchard Hills Defence Establishment to a conservation future by the Federal Government and the nearness of acquisition of the 181ha former Air Services site, Cranebrook. We will communicate with you later about this. Enough to say, at this stage, that the road reservation on the International Radio Transmitting Station site, Shane's Park, poses a serious destruction and separation problem for the Cumberland Conservation Corridor and presents the NSW Government as having deceived the public on its conservation commitment to the North-West Growth Centre.

We trust you will intervene to restore credibility to the issue by acting with expediency to remove the road reservation from the International Radio Transmitting Station site, Shane's Park.

Yours sincerely,
Wayne Olling
Vice-President
WSCA