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Thursday, 5 May 2011

The Hon Robyn Parker MP
Minister for the Environment
Level 32 Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

**Re: Protection of Western Sydney's environment
Coalition election commitments**

Dear Minister,

Firstly, congratulations to the NSW Coalition for forming government, and to yourself, for becoming our Minister for Environment and Heritage.

I write as the President of the Western Sydney Conservation Alliance (WSCA). WSCA looks forward to working with you and your office and also to continue to work with officers within your department, with whom we have been meeting and working with for many years.

I have had the good fortune of meeting with Ms Corbyn and Ms Barnes when WSCA's lobbying of the former NSW Government resulted in the protection of the former 181 hectare Air Services Australia Site at Cranebrook. That core bushland site has now been acquired by the NSW Government to be protected within its reserve system. You may be aware that the NSW Coalition promised that this site would become a Nature Reserve. The former Government had intended it be reserved as a Regional Park.

WSCA is an active group that does, as it is entitled to, involve itself in the political process. I suggested that WSCA run a candidate in the 2007 Federal Election within the seat of Lindsay. As a result of that we extracted \$15 million in funding through the Federal Program Caring for our Country. This funding was used by the former Government to purchase the Cranebrook land. Last year I ran as a candidate in the Federal Election and extracted another \$7.5 million which is available for your Government to spend towards land acquisition to form a Western Sydney ecological corridor, called the Cumberland Conservation Corridor (CCC). The CCC is a concept developed initially by the ADI Residents Action Group and taken up by WSCA.

Over the years groups I have been involved in, such as WSCA and the ADI Residents Action Group, have met with many members of the NSW Coalition in attempting to keep the NSW ALP accountable for protecting the environment. The assistance given by Shadow Ministers such as Michael Richardson, Peta Seaton, Catherine Cusack, Brad Hazzard, Prue Goward etc have been invaluable in achieving conservation outcomes for Western Sydney.

We are very keen to meet with you and your staff to discuss the election commitments of the NSW Coalition and also the commitment made by Brad Hazzard before the Penrith by-election that under the NSW Coalition a further 100 hectares of the former ADI Site in Penrith would be conserved. This would mean the protection of 100 hectares of the critically endangered ecological community Cumberland Plain Woodland.

So some of the priorities for the NSW Government in Western Sydney and the issues that we want to discuss with you are:

- The NSW Coalition election and Penrith by-election commitments

- Specific information about that funding i.e. what is to be spent in Western Sydney and where?
- Protection of the 100 hectares of the former ADI Site. What is the NSW Government doing in regards to this commitment by Brad Hazzard?
- Details about the new nature reserve classification for the Cranebrook land
- The protection of Western Sydney Priority Conservation Lands
 - Ensuring the Sydney Growth Centres Conservation Fund is spent within Western Sydney acquiring offsets
 - That the Federal/State Strategic Assessment of the Sydney Growth Centres ensures conservation outcomes for Priority Lands
 - Ensuring that Federal/State Strategic Assessment of the Sydney Growth Centres ensures the conservation of the Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council lands within the Penrith LGA. That all options to achieve this are discussed with the Federal Govt including the use of profits from the sale of surplus Commonwealth land to be spent for conservation outcomes on the Priority Lands
- The expenditure of the \$7.5 million of Federal Funds
 - What discussions has NSW had with the Feds about the use of this money?
 - That it be spent only protecting conservation lands needed for the Cumberland Conservation Corridor
- WSCA urges the NSW Coalition to classify the 558 hectare Shanes Park Air Services Australia Site as a Nature Reserve and not a Regional Park.
 - This site arguably has superior conservation value than the Cranebrook land and therefore should also be afforded protection as a Nature Reserve.
- Concerns about a proposed Biobanking site at Withers Rd Kellyville

It may be advisable that any meeting include Brad Hazzard who met with us in the years prior to the recent election and should be familiar with the issues discussed above

Please contact me on **0431 222602** for discussion about any of these matters and to inform WSCA of possible meeting dates and times.

Yours truly,



Geoff Brown
 President
 Western Sydney Conservation Alliance