

# Prized Sydney wetlands under threat of bulldozers

- By Vikki Campion
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Habitat lost ... Kangaroos grazing at old ADI site at St Marys / Pic: Tracee Lea

Source: The Daily Telegraph

**BULLDOZERS are about to raze critically endangered bushland right up to the border of western Sydney's prized wetlands in a move that conservationists fear will harm sensitive animal and plant life.**

Slashers have already moved in to begin clearing 360ha of vegetation that border the wetlands of the former ADI site - and bulldozers will be replacing the slashers by next month.

The wetlands, habitat to rare waterbirds including the lathams snipe, will have 6500 residents as new neighbours when the Jordan Springs development near Cranebrook is completed in the next 10 years.

Conservationists demanded that construction be abandoned and the entire development be reassessed under the current conservation laws, rather than the outdated law under which the building certificate was issued.

The calls came as federal and state government scientists upgrade the Cumberland Plains Woodland's protection level to "critically endangered".

Houses, apartments and roads would only be built on areas previously cleared by the Australian Defence Institute, developers Delfin Lend Lease said.

But Western Sydney Conservation Alliance president Geoff Brown called on Environment Minister Peter Garrett to protect the woodland and overturn a decision by the Howard government.

"They are about to clear 360ha of vegetation, they have critically listed it and they are saying they are not going to go into it and fight for it," he said.

By law, the approval by the previous government remains valid and the minister cannot overturn or reopen it, a spokesman for Mr Garrett said.

Delfin Lend Lease Jordan Springs project director Arthur Ilias said more than 80 environmental studies were done knowing it would be given a heightened sensitivity. "More than 60 per cent of the site is being preserved and handed over to DECC," he said.