



Zoning wars

Western Sydney Conservation Alliance President, Geoff Brown, is disappointed the Priority Conservation Lands could be 'carved up' for subdivision.

Story Emma Grodzicki • Photo Mel Jenkins

THE Western Sydney Conservation Alliance's hopes now rest in the hands of the Minister for Planning, after Penrith City Council proposed around 500 hectares of Priority Conservation Lands be zoned RU4, for rural small holdings.

The RU4 zoning has been proposed in Council's Local Environment Plan (LEP), which is to be finalised by the Minister for Planning in the near future.

A Council spokesperson said the RU4 permissible uses of the land were 'by and large what are permissible under the current zonings'.

"However, the proposed Penrith LEP better defines and describes those uses," the spokesperson said.

"These more refined descriptions help prevent inappropriate uses emerging, giving greater certainty to residents and land owners.

"RU4 allows for uses such as small scale sustainable agricultural production, dwelling houses and farm buildings, home-based businesses, outdoor recreation facilities,

roadside stalls, schools and small scale tourist and visitor accommodation."

However, President of the Western Sydney Conservation Alliance, Geoff Brown, has expressed his concerns for the bushland as it is heavily vegetated with vast numbers of endangered species, which the State Government's Cumberland Plain Recovery Plan identifies for protection.

"The very reason these species are endangered is due to zoning decisions that have allowed subdivision and clearing of bushland. And here we go again allowing more fragmentation and degradation of the little that remains," Mr Brown said.

"On the one hand they [the NSW Government] are releasing policy documents that claim will protect what's left of western Sydney's environment, the Priority Lands, yet on the other they are weeks away from signing off on a plan that is the first step in the destruction of those very areas."

Mr Brown said the only hope now was for the Planning Minister to refuse to approve Penrith's LEP and make further amendments to protect the bushland for the future.