

Media Release
Western Sydney Conservation Alliance

12th March 2010

Peter Garrett and David Bradbury must act

The Western Sydney Conservation Alliance (WSCA) has written to Peter Garrett the Federal Environment Minister and David Bradbury the Federal Member for Lindsay requesting that they urgently intervene to stop Delfin Lend Lease clearing hundreds of hectares of Critically Endangered Cumberland Plain Woodland (CPW) at the ADI Site. CPW was only recently declared Critically Endangered by Peter Garrett. Delfin Lend Lease in coming weeks propose to commence works within their first subdivision along the Northern Rd. WSCA wants Peter Garrett to use every avenue available to him under the Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) including the declaration of Critical Habitat, to protect the CPW proposed to be bulldozed within the 360 ha of Delfins development in the Penrith LGA.

Peter Garrett recently told the Sydney media that his hands are tied to stop the clearing of CPW at the ADI Site due to an environmental certificate for the entire site issued by the Howard Govt in 2002 (assessment of the site allegedly conducted sometime in the 1990's and the subsequent environmental certification issued retrospectively to Delfin in 2002). WSCA claims that the certification by the Howard Govt, based on an alleged environmental assessment in the 1990's, and issued in 2002, is scientifically dubious and politically compromised.

"It is absolute rubbish that a proper environmental assessment of the ADI Site was conducted in the 1990's by the Howard Government. The certification that Delfin has from John Howard, that Peter Garrett and David Bradbury are now hiding behind, is severely compromised and simply dodgy. The bottom line is Delfins certification is dubious due to Delfin and the Howard Govt being joint venture partners until 2004. That alleged environmental assessment would have been fudged to ensure Delfin a big development footprint and the Howard Govt the maximum profit from the sale of the ADI Site to Delfin in 2004" said Geoff Brown of WSCA.

"In the 1990's the ADI Site was routinely slashed by Delfin to deliberately minimise the regrowth of Cumberland Plain Woodland so any environmental assessment conducted under those conditions would be scientifically dubious. As anyone that drives along the Northern Rd can see there is now healthy forest and grasslands when once it looked like a bowling green. We are now seeking from Peter Garrett copies of the alleged assessment to check its validity"

"The current situation is that due to this dodgy certification Delfin have immunity from Peter Garrett's Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). They would be the only developer in Australia with a get out of jail free card to clear Critically Endangered vegetation. This is simply appalling and Peter Garrett and David Bradbury must put a stop to this Howard Govt rort and defend the Natural Heritage of Western Sydney."

"We believe that Peter Garrett can use his Federal Law to protect more of the ADI Site. There appears to be grounds for him to declare CPW with Delfin development areas Critical Habitat. This would mean a much larger conservation area and would deliver a continuous conservation corridor linking to bushland to the north and south of the site. People would cheer reducing the overdevelopment of Penrith"

"What is concerning is that David Bradbury is close to Delfin having been part of a delegation with Delfin and Penrith Council that met with Peter Garrett's Dept in 2008. The meeting was to discuss amendments to the National Estate listed areas of the proposed Regional Park, that being that Delfin be allowed a land swap to develop CPW within the National Estate areas in exchange for the protection of the same amount of CPW within Delfins development areas. Peter Garrett's Dept told the delegation that this would trigger a review of the Howard Govt certification under the EPBC Act with the likely outcome that Delfins development would be severely reduced because Peter Garrett would be obliged to protect CPW within those development areas. The delegation dropped its support for changes to the RNE boundaries. This exemplifies how dodgy the ADI development is and that for two years David Bradbury has been aware that the Howard Govt's certification is out dated, flawed and allows hundreds of hectares of CPW to be cleared. What is also clear is that Peter Garrett can do something and has scope under the EPBC Act to protect CPW within development areas.

"Now that all this has been exposed we expect action by Peter Garrett and David Bradbury."