

Media Release

Western Sydney Conservation Alliance Inc

Monday, 23 November 2009

Planning Minister called on to reject and amend Penrith Council zoning plan 500 hectares of Priority Conservation Land at risk of subdivision

The Issue

Penrith City Council (PCC) wants Dept of Planning (DoP) to approve stage 1 of their draft Local Environmental Plan (LEP) by the end of the year. Councillors recently supported 2 hectare subdivision zonings (RU4) on over 500 hectares of rare bushland that the NSW Dept of Environment Climate Change and Water (DECCW) have identified as Priority Conservation Lands in their draft Cumberland Plain Recovery Plan. DECCW recently admitted in answers to Budget Estimate Questions that the success of the Recovery Plan depends on the protection of the Priority Lands. The draft Recovery Plan is now on public exhibition until December 18. The NSW Government previously allowed Biodiversity Certification of the Sydney Growth Centres on the basis that destruction of endangered species in those areas would be offset by protecting the Priority Conservation Lands on the Cumberland Plain.

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspecies/RecoveryPlanningCumberlandPlain.htm>

Council's stage 1 draft LEP requires final approval by Kristina Kenneally the Planning Minister.

The Land in question is part of 1800 hectares within the Penrith LGA claimed from the Crown by the Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council (DLALC). DLALC state in their Business Plan the intention to actively pursue zonings off PCC to facilitate development outcomes. DLALC, following lobbying of DoP, DECC and PCC, have also had a restrictive E2 conservation zoning on a further 1200 hectares of claimed land deferred until stage 2 of the Penrith LEP (2010)

The Western Sydney Conservation Alliance (WSCA) recently met with senior reps from the Office of the Planning and Environment Ministers Office and Dept's and alerted them to this looming planning disaster. WSCA highlighted the hypocrisy of the NSW Government to be putting out policy to protect the Priority Conservation Lands but at the same time be working hand in glove with a land owner to allow those very areas to be developed. WSCA now call on Kristina Kenneally to fix up this mess and make amendments to the draft LEP to ensure the protection of some of the greatest remnants of Cumberland Plain bushland.

Comments

"We call on Kristina Kenneally to reject and fix up Penrith Councils ridiculous Local Environmental Plan. This is another massive disaster in the making for both the NSW Government and the environment of western Sydney. This 500 ha of land must be zoned for conservation." said Geoff Brown President of the Western Sydney Conservation Alliance.

"This 500 plus hectares of bushland is heavily vegetated with vast numbers of endangered species that the 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."

"The public should be outraged at the hypocrisy of the NSW Government. This is parallel universe stuff. On the one hand they 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."

"This example already makes the Recovery Plan look like a joke. How can it succeed when planning authorities can simply ignore it? If the government is serious about protecting the Priority Lands then it needs to act. It can start by rejecting Penrith Councils pro development

LEP and it can then seek to legislate to protect these lands and ensure the success of the Recovery Plan."

"These lands are in the marginal seat of Londonderry and the government needs to be reminded of that political reality."

Further Comment Geoff Brown 0431 222602

Attached are DoP Budget Estimates answers

DECCW Budget Estimate Recovery Plan answers

<http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/lc/qalc.nsf/18101dc36b638302ca257146007ee41a/188536b5617e4d27ca25763900330ec0!OpenDocument>

<http://www.deerubbin.org.au/Final-CLBP-290609.pdf>