

Media Release - 27th January 2012
Western Sydney Conservation Alliance

Robyn Parker must not turn 558 hectare western Sydney conservation jewel into public playground

A campaign has commenced to stop Robyn Parker the NSW Environment Minister from signing a Deed of Agreement with the Federal Government that will turn a 558 hectare area of near pristine bushland, promised by the Keneally Government to be preserved for nature conservation, into a public playground. The Site was the former NSW Governments promised green win from the massive Sydney Growth Centres

The NSW Government has negotiated with the Federal Government the terms for the transfer of ownership of the 558 ha Air Services Australia site on Stoney Creek Rd Shanes Park and it is revealed that NSW intends to gazette the site as a Regional Park and run it under the Wianamatta Regional Park. The Wianamatta Regional Park originated as the reserve at the nearby ADI Site. The site would be managed as per the ADI Site Plan of Management that was heavily influenced by the ADI Site developer Lend Lease. That Plan of Management allows intensive public uses that are incompatible with nature conservation. It appears a lazy and cheap approach by Robyn Parker to simply roll the site into another nearby reserves management plan.

The Western Sydney Conservation Alliance along with other environment and birding groups has for many years been calling on the Federal and NSW Government to run the site as a Nature Reserve in order to give the sites impressive flora and fauna some chance of survival as the site is soon to be surrounded by mass housing from the North West Growth Centre and to the south the ADI Site development. WSCA met over 12 months ago with Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke and Ed Husic the local Fed member and urged that the transfer of the site to NSW be conditioned on it becoming a Nature Reserve and that an RTA Freeway route be removed from the southern section of the site. Our concerns were ignored and Feds obviously just didn't think the hassle with NSW was worth it.

The Deed of Agreement now sits on Robyn Parkers desk awaiting her imminent sign off. The campaign is calling for Ms Parker not to sign the Agreement but to send it back to the Federal Government for amendments to reflect that both parties agree the site should be gazetted a Nature Reserve

Kevin Connolly the local Liberal Member for Riverstone has been contacted today to represent our concerns to Ms Parker and to organise site visits so that the Minister can see for herself why the sites unique conservation values must be properly protected by a Nature Reserve classification

"Shanes Park is one of the most precious bushland remnants in western Sydney and it would be criminal if Robyn Parker signed this Deed of Agreement to turn it into a public playground, which is what Regional Parks are under the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act. Only a Nature Reserve classification will ensure the rare birds such as the Speckled Warbler which breed on the site do not become locally extinct"

"We have called on Kevin Connolly to show some advocacy for the site and to get Robyn Parker out here so we can show her what she will put at risk if she rolls this into the flawed developer friendly Wianamatta Regional Park Plan of Management. There is the grave chance of localised extinctions if this unique site is opened up to intensive public recreational uses"

"This is easily solved. All Robyn Parker needs to do is to send this back to Anthony Albanese (Air Services is his portfolio) and Tony Burke to have the Deed of Agreement renegotiated to reflect the wording stating the site will be protected by the NSW Government as a Nature Reserve. Once that is done then we can work on getting the RTA to scrap the proposed Freeway through the site."

"We were promised this land would be conserved for nature conservation by the former NSW Government and we expect Robyn Parker to deliver this. She recently made a political expedient decision to change from Regional Park to Nature Reserve a reserve at nearby Cranebrook. That reserves conservation significance, whilst significant, does not compare to the Shanes Park site. So Minister Parker risks being tagged ignorant and a hypocrite if she condemns this land with her signature."

Comments

Geoff Brown President of WSCA