



**NSW Field
Ornithologists Club Inc**

ABN: 72 008 283 208
PO Box Q277 QVB Post Shop
Sydney NSW 1230
Email: info@birdingsw.org.au
Website: www.birdingsw.org.au

The Hon Anthony Roberts MP, Minister for Planning
Email office@roberts.minister.nsw.gov.au
26 November 2017

Dear Mr Roberts,

Re: Objection to proposed re-zoning of Native Forest at 55 Coonara Ave. West Pennant Hills.

On behalf of 400 members, I write to request the rejection of proposals by Mirvac for the construction of medium and high density housing at the above address and rejection of Mirvac's application for rezoning of most of the site to residential.

It is particularly essential that all areas of natural forest on the site are securely protected. The great majority of this forest (about 11 ha) consists of Endangered Blue Gum High Forest and Sydney Turpentine and Ironbark Forest. It is contiguous with similar moist forest in Cumberland State Forest immediately to the east, these two sites combined forming a compact block of wildlife habitat totaling about 44 ha.

This combined area is well documented as a wildlife haven. The Vulnerable Powerful Owl has been recorded nesting in the forest since at least 1999, using five hollow-bearing trees across both sites. These very old eucalypts can never be replaced. eBird data sets for the combined sites record 98 species of bird from 86 checklists between September 1985 and November 2017. Of course, birds are the easiest of all fauna to find so the indication is that there will be hundreds of other mammals, reptiles and amphibians and thousands of invertebrates.

Ecologists and biological scientists now decree that the concepts of "Offsetting" and "BioBanking" are usually totally inadequate in conserving the biodiversity of a remnant forest. It has taken tens of thousands of years, for the Australian bush to become what we see today. Offsetting, or paying money into a fund in lieu of physical offsets, would only ensure the total destruction of the forest on the Mirvac site, which could never be truly replaced.

Other contingencies require preservation of all forest in this particular area. The size of a remnant forest will be critical for retention of species of flora and fauna. Buffer zones help protect the interior of bushland. There is barely enough native bush corridor remaining to connect the Cumberland SF and Mirvac block with Darling Mills Creek and Bidjigal Reserve to the south-west.

It is difficult to draw any conclusion other than this site should be preserved in its entirety. We call for the block to be zoned as an "environmentally sensitive area" such as E2 and preserved.

Sincerely
Ian Bailey OLO
Office of Conservation
Birding NSW

CC: Shadow Minister for Planning; Minister for the Environment;
Mircac MD; Mayor and General Manager The Hills Shire Council.