



Birding NSW Inc

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The Secretary
The Department of Planning Industry and Environment
Email: biodiversity@planning.nsw.gov.au
8 October 2020.
Dear Secretary,

RE: The Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan

Of the 1050 members and supporters of Birding NSW, close to 950 live in the Sydney basin. The Office of Conservation of Birding NSW has **objected** to many proposals designed to increase dwelling numbers for an increasing population, dwellings in progressively smaller and smaller spaces where little natural bush remains.

Our Constitution states, in part, 'To promote the study and conservation of Australian birds and their habitat.....' Accordingly we have written to Governments and Government Departments on many occasions expressing our concerns on matters likely to destroy precious habitats. Issues such as the raising of the wall of Warragamba Dam, preserving the woodlands already locked into the BioBanking system at Fernhill Estate for example and the hugely controversial Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 when not even 500 scientists, speaking by petition, could be heard.

The fact that Governments want to increase the accommodation available to house more than double the current population of Western Sydney, clearly flags the intention to destroy woodlands to build. In the pages of the documents that set out to reason the 'plan to conserve', no mention is made of the conservation of all mature native trees or the excluding of waterways with a wide buffer zone from government or private developments.

One of the most disturbing aspects of the Offsetting of any natural bushland and BioBanking of developers funds, is the fact that it is *impossible* to guarantee like-for-like. The bush anywhere in Australia, but especially that left in the Sydney basin (<7% of the original woodland) is unique in its form and content. No other biodiversity in the world is like that in this country. And it has taken millions of years for it to become that way. Destroy a patch of it and that section is gone forever. If another patch is reserved 'in perpetuity' as an offset, the result is still a Net Loss of Biodiversity and no-one of this generation can guarantee that the reserve will stay protected against future new owners and new Governments. Cash in the BioBank can be used to purchase property 100s of kilometres from the site of destruction. How can that conserve our ecology?

There is one industry that should be paramount in demand for preservation of the Australian Bush. Tourism. While the current pandemic may change our lives forever and is certainly closing borders, people will certainly want to come to Australia to experience our unique bushlands and animals. This fact alone stands in support of a new airport in Western Sydney and therefore for visitor accommodation. 'New buildings for old' is all that is required.

Birds and thousands of other creatures, insects in particular, rely on trees for a home. Without trees and the attendant understory, there will be nothing. All taxa, including what is in the topsoil layer of an 'Estate' is totally bulldozed away so that builders can use and profit from, every square metre of space. Birding NSW knows the birds of the Sydney Basin having monitored them for decades. Birds are the indicators of the health of an environment.

We call, urgently, on the Government and the Department to review any plan that includes removal of the bush.

Yours Faithfully

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