

Submission
No 131

**INQUIRY INTO PLANNING SYSTEM AND THE IMPACTS
OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND
COMMUNITIES**

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 2 December 2023

Partially
Confidential

Terms of Reference

That Portfolio Committee 7 inquire into and report on how the planning system can best ensure that people and the natural and built environment are protected from climate change impacts and changing landscapes, and in particular:

(a) developments proposed or approved:

(iii) in areas that are threatened ecological communities or habitat for threatened species.

(b) the adequacy of planning powers and planning bodies, particularly for local councils, to review,

amend or revoke development approvals, and consider the costs, that are identified as placing

people or the environment at risk as a consequence of:

(i) the cumulative impacts of development,

(iii) biodiversity loss, and

(iii) rapidly changing social, economic and environmental circumstances.

As stated in The Extinction Crisis in Australia's Cities and Towns - Australian Conservation Foundation, "Australia has a terrible record of failing to protect our unique wildlife. We have caused the extinction of more mammals than any other country and are the fourth-worst nation in the world for the extinction of native wildlife".

This failure to protect our unique wildlife and threatened species is never more apparent than in the city of Newcastle, where the loss of forested habitat to urban development continues unabated. A proposed 66 lot resident estate by Landcom would see homes built on two undeveloped areas of bushland (11.3 hectares) on both sides of Myall Road. Newcastle Council's Draft DCP 2023 takes out 520 hectares of greenfield land around Minmi, including three endangered ecological communities, to develop 2280 dwellings by Winten Development. Eden Estate are proposing to rezone the Link Road Forest between Wallsend and Glendale (Newcastle and Lake Macquarie LGA's) to build between 3000 and 4000 homes. This will involve the loss of 592 hectares of bushland to urban development. The Link Road Forest has over 50 endangered flora and fauna, some of which include the Little Eagle, Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Little Bent-winged Bat, Large Bent-winged Bat, Squirrel Glider, Masked Owl, Netted Bottle Brush, Square-tailed Kite, Southern Myotis, Grey-Headed Flying-Fox, Powerful Owl, Slaty Red Gum, Small-flower Grevillea, Scrub Turpentine and Black-eyed Susan. If the rezoning application is successful it will displace threatened species and impact connectivity from the Watagan Range for species along the coast, as this area is the last significant piece of bushland linking east Lake Macquarie and Newcastle's reserves.

When are we going to become more responsible with urban development and start to 'go up and not out'. In May of this year, Premier Chris Minns called for an end of urban sprawl, saying "people must get comfortable with the idea of going up". He "ordered his ministers to find vacant blocks of public land to rezone for housing as part of his push for housing supply".

Whilst this is happening in some areas of Newcastle, perhaps we should start doing the same elsewhere so that we can keep the last remaining bushland that we have for future generations.

We need your help.

Please find attached past Newcastle Herald articles and a document from the Hunter Community Environment Centre objecting to the proposed rezoning of the Link Road Forest for urban development.