

Community Submission

RE: Broader Western Sydney Employment Area Draft Structure Plan

As a resident of Western Sydney and a neighbour to the planned BWSEA, I **OBJECT** to the Proposal, due to insufficient assessment of current vegetation, planned removal of endangered Cumberland Plain Woodland, plus the following will occur if development continues – the loss of habitat for native fauna, and increased traffic and poor health of Western Sydney residents caused by pollution of the planned infrastructure.

Summary Points Discussed

- Destruction of roadside verges including shrub and canopy vegetation
- Destruction of threatened flora populations
- Destruction of native fauna habitat
- Ecological study done is not credible
- Offsets not acceptable for this vegetation
- Proposed Airport in Plan
- Flooding and pollution caused by development and Airport
- Increased traffic caused by development and Airport
- Road widening
- Loss of rural landscape , market gardens and fertile land
- BWSEA will not improve Australian Economy and will not produce the significant amount of jobs promised for Western Sydney
- Our Future
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The open grassland, roadside verges of shrubs, roadside of mature trees, small tree populations and riparian areas, are home to unique western Sydney wildlife which call this area HOME. Development of this area will cause habitat loss for these animals which include owls, echidnas, wallabies, kangaroos and large lizards to name a few. Micro fishing bats need open areas near dams plus large tree hollows to survive. The BWSEA is their home and they are found in the middle of the Badgerys's Creek site. The Peaceful dove and Jacky Winters, plus kites are still surviving in this area but will be lost from Western Sydney if this vegetation is removed. Even vegetation with no canopy cover is important. The importance of shrubs is for the small birds. In a morning observation, 70 species of birds can be spotting amongst the roadside verges of shrubs and trees. 10 of these are very uncommon in Western Sydney. This area is the last stronghold for these birds and other wildlife. Having uncommon birds shows that what may not seem like much vegetation is good habitat and is not just vacant land to develop.

Important populations of *Pultenaea parviflora*, a vulnerable shrub, can be found on roadside verges within the BWSEA. These will be lost if the area is heavily developed and roads widened. Threatened *Marsdenia viridiflora*, a climber, is found in numerous sites within the BWSEA at Badgerys's Creek. This is a plant that screams Western Sydney. Named after Samuel Marsden – early settler and owner of Mamre Homestead. This area is the last remains of The Cumberland Plain Woodland of Western Sydney, and need to be protected. There is unique and endemic species to Western Sydney within the BWSEA.

The flora study done is not creditable (Exhibition draft – Ecological Report). Done by Ecoflora, who did not actually survey the site. They did a desktop survey – they looked at what others have published on the area in the past. They did not identify threatened species, they did not identify areas of vegetation, as they did not visit the survey area. The picture on the front cover of the document is not even from the BWSEA. It is from Marsden Park outside the area. Therefore a thorough survey needs to be done which actually looks at what there is. We need to be informed of the facts of what is on ground before decisions can be made. The DPI must engage a genuine on-ground ecological assessment and put this back on public exhibition.

Connected pockets of vegetation have not been mapped or counted. These are important. Even 6-7 trees and grassland between paddocks are important for small birds. Not all birds and animals live in thick woodlands. The Cumberland Plain Woodland is a unique landscape involving areas of grassland, and woodland which is important for all flora and fauna of the area.

No offsets for this area. The indicated Vegetation area to be retained on the map of BWSEA is in the Erskine Park area, which is already used as an offset for other developed areas and cannot be used for this development. There is less than half of existing vegetation (2500ha) shown on the BWSEA map of which more than 20sqkm will be impacted upon by the development. The Erskine Park vegetation that is conserved is also not a good representation of the vegetation within the BWSEA as it is heavily impacted on by rubbish dumping, arson, and feral animals due to its proximity to the urban area. This area has also had many large trees removed and been heavily worked by revegetation companies in varying qualities of work.

Important major trees alongside Elizabeth Drive need to be retained. This area cannot be replaced elsewhere with offsets as you cannot replace old trees which are home to wildlife with vegetation of a different type outside the BWSEA. Vegetation must be retained within the BWSEA. Vegetation needs to be retained to keep a biodiversity corridor (a corridor of vegetation linking creek lines, national parks, reserves and any native vegetation north and south , east and west. It allows movement of animals & insects on land and in the air (migration and breeding) and movement of plant material (pollination important for plant survival). Without linking corridors of vegetation the genetic diversity of flora and fauna become limited and populations will die. If areas are to be defined for offset than an exact area must be calculated not a dollar value. As the area of land that needs to be replaced is a certain size, and year by year land becomes more expensive, and if a dollar value is given there will not be much to buy. Therefore **save money** by not removing vegetation avoid having to deal with offsets!

Research demonstrates that to offset habitat loss you need to restore an area at least 20 times as large. This ratio is used by the Federal Department of Environment Sustainability Population and Communities. The Biobanking proposed for the BWSEA typically provides offsets just 5 times the area destroyed – this is not based on science and is not acceptable. Even if a Biobanking offset ratio were used, the proposal will remove around 2000ha of native vegetation. This would require an offset of over 10000ha. DPI's continued destruction of western Sydney has made sure there are no longer sufficient natural areas to meet this need.

This is fertile land for vegetation, wildlife and agriculture – not for urbanisation and industrial. It is an important open public space.

Proposed Airport is not suited to the area as –

- It is too close to the catchment area which will pollute water from fuel dumps or runoff of hard surfaces including heavy metals
 - Will cause significant air and noise pollution
 - Increased traffic
 - Increased runoff from hard surfaces will destroy sensitive creek lines
 - No need for second airport as Sydney airport is only running at 60% of capacity
- (20.8.13)

Development means increased runoff from hard surfaces. More runoff to creek lines will cause erosion due to increased water flow, loss of habitat ponds of water in creek line as water is not absorbed by surrounding grassland, but increased due to hard surfaces. Pollution by rubbish and heavy metals from nearby industrial areas and airport will reduce quality of these creek lines. There will be significant loss of vegetation, habitat and fauna due to the change in water flow. More hard surfaces mean, an increase in water and flooding due to the reduction in the amount of land acting as a sponge. Now agricultural land is acting as a sponge as it absorbs the rainfall and slowly releases it into the catchment, a natural gradual addition of water to the creek, unlike hard surfaces which create a flood like event.

If an Airport is to exist – the broader area around the airport as a buffer zone should include the maintenance of already existing vegetation. This can become a wildlife corridor plus noise and visual buffer.

No widening of Elizabeth Drive is important. Old trees line the road and need to be maintained along the whole length. If more lanes need to be added then the road should be relocated to adjacent paddock or add an extra 2 lanes in the paddock alongside for other direction traffic and maintain both sides of tree line in between the two directions of 2 lanes. However widening of Elizabeth Dr is not required as BWSEA and Airport is not required.

BWSEA is not needed as it does not create significant new jobs. The only jobs that are certain are the jobs to build the infrastructure which are limited professions and for a limited time. Once the area is developed the jobs will be gone. Industrial areas employ limited people as they are highly mechanised. Most likely the warehouses created will be for businesses that deal in imports rather than factories making products. Therefore imports shipped into Sydney need to be transported to the west creating traffic. Then these products will be shipped back to the stores and customers in suburban areas, thus more traffic 2x more traffic. Invest in infrastructure in inner Sydney areas to take these imports and reduce the traffic going back and forth to the west . Therefore there will be less congestion and less maintenance and upgrade of roads and infrastructure required.

Businesses will build themselves in the west if needed. Do not force what people do not need or want.

Western Sydney is a rural area. Don't add noise pollution, air pollution, retain vegetation and arable land and don't add more traffic!

If the Airport is added to Badgery's Creek, more cars will be on roads in Western Sydney to travel to new airport. This is not a solution to the traffic problem. Having an Airport in western Sydney is not of any benefit to western Sydney residents. By luck your flight if living in western Sydney will be departing or arriving in Sydney and vice versa, if living in Sydney by luck your flight will always be departing and landing in western Sydney. There will always be travelling to the airport. Two Airports means more traffic in both directions.

Think of our children. The BWSEA is a quick fix political idea that does not help the future of Western Sydney. Putting money into building Australian Business and skills training, not building warehouses for imports is what will help the economy and produce jobs.

Regards,