

Courtney Coburn

From: Matthew Borsato <Matthew.Borsato@portstephens.nsw.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 16 February 2015 9:10 AM
To: Evan [Carman Group]
Subject: 98 Coachwood Drive Medowie - Ecological Comments

Hi Evan

The following is a summary from initial assessment in relation to environmental issues (only):

- **Conclusions & Recommendations**

- The ecological assessment provided confirms the conservation value of this area, accurately reflecting the intent of its E2 zoning. The proposal is not appropriate development in consideration of the performance criteria for rezoning in the CKPoM. The greater detail provided also reflects previous assessments finding that the site is severely constrained.
- The proposed E1 area does seek to preserve the majority of preferred koala habitat and EECs on site already conserved on site. However the validity of the proposed E1 area as an offset to justify the removal of the already E2 conserved flora and fauna in the proposed R2 area should be assessed using OEH biobanking guidelines.
- The ecological assessment establishes that the proposed removal of vegetation will not result in a significant impact on threatened species and EECs. However the assessment does not adequately apply OEH biobanking guidelines to consider the preservation of proposed E1 zoned area as an offset and mitigation measure for the loss of habitat and EEC. Similarly the assessment does not adequately assess the offsetting of the removal of Preferred Koala Habitat under the CKPoM.
- **Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management** Appendix 2 of the CKPoM provides Performance Criteria for Rezoning Requests. The proposed removal of preferred koala habitat and a preferred buffer is not consistent with criteria that rezoning should not result in development within areas of Preferred Koala Habitat or defined habitat buffers. Council has previously allowed removal of such areas if the lost habitat was offset. Both *E. robusta* and *E. tereticornis* will be removed as part of the proposed development footprint, these trees are important koala feed trees and no compensatory measures have been investigated.
- **Fauna Corridors** The northern area (proposed R2 area above the limit of the existing residential area and adjacent to the Medowie State Forest) in particular is a core habitat area (Suitable contiguous patches of habitat large enough to sustain a viable population) for the Phascogale and Squirrel Glider with Landscape Links (contiguous patches of vegetation within which species move and forage between areas of dwelling habitat) for the koala and Black Bittern. Due to the proximity of the National Park to the east and Medowie SF to the west this area should not be developed as it is an important E-W corridor link.
- The current development footprint will leave the Medowie State Forest area isolated and technically under s5A(d)(ii) (in relation to the habitat of a threatened species, population or ecological community : whether an area of habitat is likely to become fragmented or isolated from other areas of habitat as a result of the proposed action). It will be a significant impact on isolating any threatened species, such as the koala, phascogale or squirrel glider, that maybe found in the forest.
- **EEC** – there is removal of some swamp sclerophyll EEC (also known as preferred koala Habitat), this too has not been offset.
- To assess the validity of the proposed E1 land and to maybe offset some the loss of the koala habitat, EEC and the northern fauna corridor of the proposed footprint, the Proponent must look at biobanking offset lands in the vicinity and the E1 areas should be assessed as an offset under OEH biobanking guidelines.

When I receive preliminary comments from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage I will forward them through to you.

I will also follow up with Council's Facilities and Services Group preliminary comments on engineering matters.

Regards