

Media Release

SENATOR THE HON. ERIC ABETZ

Special Minister of State
Liberal Senator for Tasmania

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ABETZ MOVES TO PROTECT ENDANGERED WOODLANDS AND BRING JOBS TO WESTERN SYDNEY

Senator Eric Abetz, Special Minister of State, today announced that the Commonwealth Government had fulfilled its election commitment to protect all areas of the former ADI site at St Marys that are listed on the Register of National Estate.

"The Government made a commitment during the election that all Cumberland Plain Woodland located on the site would be protected. However, at the time there were a number of legal processes under the *Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975* that needed to be satisfied before this commitment could be formalised. These processes have now been fulfilled," Senator Abetz said.

"We have kept our promise to the people of Western Sydney. We have allowed both reasonable development – which will create new jobs in the region – and the protection of those areas of historical and environmental significance.

"The St Marys site covers 1,538 hectares of land about 45 km west of the Sydney CBD, and has been used for farming, grazing and munitions manufacturing for more than 100 years. The site has been the subject of a vigorous public campaign, led by the Hon Jackie Kelly MP, to protect the woodlands and the animals that live on the site.

"The entire 828 hectares on the Register of the National Estate will be preserved and this ensures that the Cumberland Plain Woodland on the site will be protected.

"Cumberland Plain Woodland was once the predominant ecology in Western Sydney. However, due to agricultural and urban activities, only some 10,000 hectares remains, mainly in the form of small, fragmented stands.

"This announcement ensures the protection of one of the largest stands of Cumberland Plain Woodland in Western Sydney. By taking this decision the Commonwealth has demonstrated its commitment to environmental protection and community consultation.

"This is a good decision for Western Sydney. It's a balanced decision which will generate thousands of new jobs but still protect the region's environmental treasures," Senator Abetz said.

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