

MEDIA RELEASE - 19 November 2003

ADI RESIDENTS ACTION GROUP

Residents question NPWS commitment to ADI Site Regional Park

Residents opposed to the development of the former ADI Site St Marys have expressed disappointment in the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) over their handling of the creation and management of the sites Regional Park and their role in assessing the Macrofauna Management Plan

Due to the political pressure exerted on the Federal Government by the ADI Residents Action Group (ADI RAG), 900 hectares of the site is to be transferred from the Commonwealth to the NSW government to be set-aside as a Regional Park. NPWS will manage the Regional Park as well as being the consent authority for Macrofauna culling on the site. NPWS are currently assessing public submissions to the developers Macrofauna Management Plan.

“ADI RAG fought for 10 years to have this first 900 hectares saved and we are very angry with the way NPWS is going about protecting the conservation values of the ADI Site and consulting the public. We fear that NPWS are not following due process in this matter” Said, spokesperson Geoff Brown.

“NPWS are obliged under the Sydney Regional Environment Plan 30 and the St Marys Development Agreement to create and manage the Regional Park. They must follow a formal process to establish this Regional Park. It is their responsibility alone to do this yet we are witnessing the hijacking of this formal process by the developers, Delfin Lend Lease and Comland, who have turned it into a public relations stunt to promote their urban development.”

“It is outrageous that the developers can place advertisements in local papers calling on members of the public to volunteer with an organisation called Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) to, ‘...assist in establishing the 900-hectare Regional Park.’ CVA to our knowledge have only been contracted by the developers to remove weeds from the site not create a Regional Park.”

“What are we to make of this situation? NPWS have a statutory and legal process to follow in order to create the Regional Park yet they appear complicit in allowing the developers to peddle blatant misinformation about the process to the public.”

“We are also concerned that NPWS is treating some public submissions to the Macrofauna Management Plan with contempt. The 100 plus pictures and letters from local children opposing the plan have been rejected by NPWS on the basis that the children would not have read the draft plan. This is a totally subjective decision and we want NPWS to tell us what legislation justifies this rejection.”

“We fear NPWS are working too closely with the developers. They appear happy to allow the developers to run the process of creating the Regional Park and its Plan of Management. We want NPWS to act in the public's interest not the developers by urgently convening the stakeholder committee to begin developing the parks Plan of Management.”

“We are seeking clarification from NPWS about the process they are following. If they fail to respond to our inquiries then we will present evidence to the NSW Ombudsman asking to have NPWS's role in the development investigated.”

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