

ADI Residents Action Group

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ADI Site Kangaroos still threatened Government fails to understand community outcry over development

The State Governments relentless desire to develop the former ADI Site at St Marys continues with its failure to stop plans to displace Sydney's last Kangaroos and Emus from the Site.

Within hours of the Environment Minister, Bob Debus, ruling out shooting as a method of culling, developers, Delfin Lend Lease, have lodged a draft Macro Fauna Management Plan (MFMP) and a Precinct Plan with Blacktown Council for public comment.

The Government have been complicit in getting the Precinct Plans lodged with Council. Under SREP 30, the planning instrument for the whole development, the first Precinct Plan must be accompanied by a draft MFMP for the whole site. It appears that the government are prepared to consider a dubious MFMP to get the first development off the ground.

"The Government have only addressed the method of the culling, they are ignoring the main community outrage that it's their housing development that is to blame for the need to force the roos off the site." Said spokesperson for the group.

The Kangaroo dilemma is only the tip of the iceberg for the Environment Minister. He now is exposed to the bigger question of how he will protect the rest of the sites rare and threatened biodiversity. His government has failed to implement a Cumberland Plain Woodland Recovery Plan that under law was required to be in place by 2000. Without this plan there is no real protection for the sites bushland.

"It is obvious this recovery plan, if it were implemented, would severely threaten developments in Sydney's west like the ADI Site. It is plain to see that this would result in a huge loss of revenue to the Government and they are keen to avoid this."

ADI RAG has received a copy of the development agreement, a document outlining government and developer commitments to the site. It appears that areas of the 900-hectare Regional Park will be released over the life of the 15-year development not in one go as always implied by the Government to the public.

"Why is it that these matters of public concern are only surfacing now? The public shouldn't have to be the ones to expose this information. The government must come clean if they are to retain any credibility on this issue. There should be an inquiry into this whole process if they fail to do so."

An important fact being overlooked in this current debate is that NPWS do not want to fund the ongoing management of Kangaroos on the site. Once the landowners have handed the Regional Park to NPWS the Kangaroo problem is theirs to look after.

"Bob Debus knows that if Kangaroos remain on the site then NPWS will bear the cost of looking after them in the long term. This is why there is no certain future for them on the ADI Site whilst the development is alive."

"The Government have failed to read the public outcry on this issue. The public is primarily saddened that the Government's development plans leave no place for the Kangaroos. The secondary concern was that shooting was the proposed culling method."

“The Government needs to admit that they can’t resolve the Kangaroo impasse. That the proposed alternate methods are either inhumane or unrealistic. The government is acting out of desperation by considering any of the proposed alternative methods.”

Moving the roos off the Site would involve chasing the roos, tranquillising them, and then having to quickly transport them to an alternate site. This is totally unrealistic; as they have nowhere close to safely release them. Sterilising Kangaroos is an unproven method, it only means that they will not breed, Kangaroos can live for over 20 years, it is doubtful the developers will wait for them to die out which again is unrealistic.

The proposed 900 ha Regional Park will not support Kangaroos as it is primarily woodland. NPWS have no Plan of Management for the Regional Park; Regional Parks are not conservation zones and are primarily for public recreation purposes. The Regional Park cannot be fenced. In fact the fence surrounding the whole site must come down eventually. So how can people claim that the roos have a future on the site?

“The only real alternative is for the Government to scrap their development plans and settle for a draw with the community. A properly managed and funded conservation park would be the answer. Surely the Government can spare a few hundred hectares from their current urban development juggernaut to save the ADI Site and its inhabitants”.

The exhibition of the MFMP and the Precinct Plans is another area of concern. They are isolated at Blacktown Council up to 30 kilometres from the residents affected by the development. They should also be on exhibition at Penrith Council and all council centres in between.

Further comment

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