

ADI Residents Action Group

Media Release

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ADI site National Estate lands under attack

The ADI Residents Action Group is calling on Penrith City Council and local Federal Member, Jackie Kelly; to challenge the NSW Governments latest attack on National Estate listed bushland at the ADI Site.

The people of Western Sydney, since the 2001 Federal election, were promised by the Federal Government, Penrith Council and the developer, Lend Lease, that the 828 ha of the ADI site listed in the Register of the National Estate (RNE) would be transferred from Commonwealth ownership to the NSW Government to be formally protected as public land within a newly created 900-hectare Regional Park (RP).

The NSW Government is now setting about derailing this commitment by planning to exclude 35 ha of RNE land from the 900 ha RP and to allow Lend Lease to construct its drainage basins on 15 ha of RNE land within the RP.

The NSW NPWS announced last week to a Community Reference Group, assisting them with a draft Plan of Management (PoM) for the RP, its proposal to excise 35 ha of the National Estate from the RP because management of the land is not “environmentally or financially sustainable” this despite brokering a deal with Lend Lease for \$6.9 million to adequately manage and protect the RP.

The St Marys Development Agreement - a legal agreement between the State and Lend Lease - states that any National Estate land not accepted by the NSW NPWS into the RP is to be managed by the land owner – In this case the developer Lend Lease.

“ADI RAG has written to all Penrith Councillors and approached Jackie Kelly to act immediately to get this mess sorted out. They promised after the 2001 federal election that a 900 ha RP would be created that also protected the 828 ha of RNE listed land.” Said, Geoff Brown, for ADI RAG.

“The NSW Government has once again shown its appalling lack of commitment to western Sydney and its environment. What sort of government would hand over protection of the National Estate to a property developer? This is simply outrageous and is an insult to those who fought for years to at least get 900 ha of the site kept in public hands.”

"Bob Carr is on public record as saying he would protect the whole site as parkland if it was handed to him by the Federal Government. Why then won't he protect the entire 828 ha of RNE as Regional Park? Does he even know what is going on out here?"

“The federal government's concern for the RNE land is also questionable. Lumping the RNE lands into the sale of the ADI site appears to have resulted in Lend Lease owning part of the National Estate. Our belief was the RNE lands at the ADI site were not Lend Leases to own but would be retained in public ownership through direct transfer to the States public reserve system. The Feds certainly botched this and should have ensured a greater level of certainty for the RNE lands. These lands were RNE listed because of their conservation value, they certainly weren't listed so that Lend Lease could use them for drainage basins.”

“Council and Jackie Kelly must act. This use of the RNE lands is in direct conflict with their policy on the ADI Site. Penrith Council at one stage wanted the whole ADI site protected but in early 2000, when Labor came to power in Council, they dropped that support to only seek protection of the RNE listed parts of the site. That position has been their line in the sand and

they now must put aside political loyalties and take this fight straight to Bob Debus, Craig Knowles and Diane Beamer to ensure every inch of the RNE lands is formally protected.”

The NSW NPWS are only a few months away from publicly exhibiting a draft PoM for the RP. It is crucial that these problems be sorted out before then.”

Further comment - Geoff Brown 0431 222602