



Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

21 June 2019

EPBC Monitoring
Department of Environment and Energy
GPO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601
Attention: Grant Liddy

By email: compliance@environment.gov.au

Dear Mr Liddy

Subject: Enquiry regarding approval requirements prior to slashing of Threatened Species and Ecological Community at 10 Great Western Highway Wentworth Falls NSW

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community based volunteer organisation with over 800 members. The goal of the Society is to promote the conservation of the environment in the Greater Blue Mountains region. The Blue Mountains Conservation Society has had a long standing interest in the property at 10 Great Western Highway Wentworth Falls, NSW.

It has come to the attention of the Society that a significant portion of the above property has been cleared (slashed and trittered) in preparation for a private commercial development on the site. Most of the clearing has been conducted in *Eucalyptus sieberi/Corymbia gummifera* Open Forest and Woodland that supported a number of **listed threatened species of plants and animals**. It occurred furthermore immediately upslope of the **listed Threatened Ecological Community of Temperate Highland Peat Swamps on Sandstone** that itself has been damaged in part by the process. We seek your advice on whether approval for the clearing should have been gained prior to the commencement of clearing under the provisions of the EPBC Act 1999 designed to protect listed threatened species and ecological communities.

Specifically significant damage has occurred to:

1. The *Eucalyptus sieberi/Corymbia gummifera* Open Forest and Woodland habitat of the following EPBC listed threatened species of plants and animals known from the site:
 - **Koala** (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) – **Vulnerable**
 - **Spotted-tail Quoll** (*Dasyurus maculatus*) – **Endangered**
 - **Persoonia acerosa** (a Geebung) – **Vulnerable**
 - **Pultenaea glabra** (Smooth Bush-pea) – **Vulnerable**

2. The headwater tributaries of Bedford Creek that (used to) feed directly into the **TEC Temperate Highland Peat Swamps**. The swamp hydrology has been seriously threatened by the slashing and bulldozing that has occurred; upland streams have been bulldozed flat, the natural surface permeability changed and the balance between direct runoff and infiltration (that maintained regular seepage to the swamp vegetation) have all been altered. There is a serious and immediate possibility that the swamps will face erosion deluges during the heavy rain that is encountered on this hillside, or they may dry-out in periods of inadequate rain
3. The edge-effects on the swamp vegetation because of the removal of the protecting woodland could be considerable – drying out due to increased exposure to wind and higher temperatures, changed hydrology as in 2 above, and weed invasion
4. The south western corner of the swamp appears to have been directly impacted on by the clearing. There is a real concern that further ground-works for the proposed development will impinge further on this ecological community.

It is for the above reasons that the Society would very much appreciate your consideration of the issue and your advice as to whether the developer should have sought permission from the Department of Environment and Energy prior to carrying out the bulldozing and clearing.

Yours sincerely



Lachlan Garland
President
Blue Mountains Conservation Society
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