



NEW SOUTH WALES

MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

In reply please quote: MOF25089

Mr Geoff Brown
Convenor
ADI Residents Action Group
PO Box 4134
WERRINGTON NSW 2747

3 - NOV 2006

Dear Mr Brown

Thank you for your email of 3 September 2006 regarding the former Air Services Australia (ASA) site at Cranebrook. I apologise for the delay in responding.

I appreciate your concerns about the future of the ASA site. I understand that its owners have been investigating options to rezone the site, and have recently submitted a rezoning application to Penrith Council.

As you are aware, the site has significant conservation values, which have been confirmed in recent assessment reports commissioned by the owners. Those values include the presence of a number of endangered ecological communities, populations of several threatened flora species, habitat for threatened fauna, and areas of Aboriginal heritage significance. The site also forms part of an existing biodiversity corridor between the proposed regional park at the former ADI site to the south-east and the large areas of vegetation in the Castlereagh lands to the north.

The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) has met with the owners, their consultants and Penrith Council to discuss proposals to develop the ASA site. DEC has also provided formal comment to Council as part of consultations on the new draft Local Environment Plan (LEP) for the Penrith Local Government Area. DEC has made it clear to Council that the site has conservation values and that those values must drive any future decisions regarding the site. DEC has also indicated that, based on current information, the protection of the entire site is a priority.

I understand that Penrith Council intends to consider land use options for the site during preparation of the new LEP. This will enable proposals to be considered in the context of the planning vision for the whole LGA, rather than being dealt with in isolation. DEC will continue to work with Council during the LEP process, and provide advice on the Cranebrook site and other areas of conservation value in the LGA.


I note your recommendation for the purchase of the site using funds generated from the development of the Growth Centres. As you are aware, proposals to purchase high conservation value lands outside the Growth Centres were flagged earlier this year, during the public exhibition of the draft Growth Centres State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP).

Following gazettal of the SEPP in July, a final Conservation Plan for the Growth Centres is under development by the Department of Planning. I understand that the Plan will detail a package of conservation outcomes to accompany the development of the Growth Centres. The Plan will also be publicly exhibited as part of a proposal to seek biodiversity certification for the SEPP.

Until the Conservation Plan is released, adopted, and implementation is underway, it will not be possible to make firm commitments regarding the protection of any specific sites outside of the Growth Centres. However, given the conservation values present at Cranebrook, this site would clearly be a suitable candidate for further investigation if funds were to become available.

In the meantime, DEC will continue to work with Penrith Council as preparation of the new LEP progresses.

Yours sincerely



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