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**News**

# Outrage over 'wanton destruction' on koala habitat

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Rob Mellett

RESIDENTS have now lodged hundreds of submissions against plans for almost 2,000 homes on one of the last remaining chunks of uncleared bushland inhabited by scores of koalas and other protected wildlife.

Developer Stockland wants to flatten 169ha of bushland for 1,839 homes at Springview Village at 7001 Mur Boulevard, 7006 Panorama Drive and 1 Telopea Way, Springfield.

Stockland's proposals include bulldozing the ridgelines 14m lower than their present height and the overburden placed in the gullies.

The State Government Wildlife Online database shows around 224 koalas – which can walk up to 10km for food a day – have been observed within 5km of the proposed development.

A Saunders Havill ecological report submitted by the developer, however, noted that its spotters saw little evidence of the endangered koala.

"Indirect evidence in the form of scats has been recorded on site, however ... no direct observations have been made on or immediately adjoining the site," according ecological report.

"The uncleared area contains ecological values of state and federal significance and is home to many threatened species."

The Saunders Havill report also noted that the area contained vulnerable animals like the grey-headed flying-fox, the rufous fantail, the rainbow bee-eater and the powerful owl, plus 17 threatened native flora species.

Residents have reported sightings of regent honeyeaters, brush tailed phascogales and brush-tailed rock wallabies.

Brookwater teacher Emma (surname withheld) said it was the worst case of planning she had encountered.

"This type of wanton destruction is an absolute travesty in Australia," she said.

"Our children would be devastated if the land clearing – which we were assured by real estate agents would never be cleared – begins.

"They know koalas will die, so how should we explain this senseless destruction?

"Don't animals have a right to live, or are they no longer of any value to society?"

Multiple Acts affect the site – the key ones outside of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act being the Vegetation Management Act for Category B (remnant) vegetation and Koala Habitat Area (core) under the Planning Regulation 2017.

Separate EPBC approvals for clearing of federally significant values would be required.

Recent sewerage pipe works near Opossum Creek have already had an impact on the ecosystem with large areas of trees removed and wildlife habitats lost as erosion kicks in, according to Emma.

Former council wildlife officer and ecological expert Keith McCosh said the key wildlife corridor was the last large remnant of intact natural bushland between the Goodna and Camira reserves and the White Rock Conservation Park.

"This precinct plan flies in the face of modern-day thinking about environmental sustainability," Bellbird Park resident of 20 years, Mr McCosh said.

"This plan is unsustainable and is an area of tremendous ecological and historical value – it has areas of rainforest and the Woogaroo Scrub which the first European settlers were so in awe of.

"This area is our home – we can't keep trashing it and making things extinct."

Mr McCosh said he wanted the steep land left intact with vegetated gullies and ridgetops.

"There needs to be sufficient habitat throughout the development to allow houses and koalas; a koala plan ought to accompany the application," he said.

A Stockland spokeswoman said approvals on the land were still progressing and any development would comply with approvals.

"We will continue to work with all levels of government," she said.

Planning in this area commenced 30 years ago when the area was first purchased by Springfield City Group (formerly Springfield Land Corporation). The primary Planning Instrument was created in 1997 being the Springfield Structure Plan (the structure plan)



A Council spokeswoman said the more the hundreds of public submissions so far made would be considered and assessed by council officers.

"All of the public submissions received and incoming, as well as documentation relating to this application, are continuing to be uploaded and publicly available on council's development.i website," she said.

Make submissions at [plandev@ipswich.qld.gov.au](mailto:plandev@ipswich.qld.gov.au).



The area of bushland to be cleared for Stockland's Springview Village.

