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Pipeline works turn bush to desert

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Rob Mellett

BELLBIRD Park residents have been left wondering when a huge swathe of bushland axed for a sewage pipeline will be rehabilitated.

Springfield City Group ordered work to remove a 40m-wide, 2.3km belt of bushland to service housing developments around 18 months ago.

More than eight months since work finished, that area, which runs parallel to the Opossum and Woogaroo creeks, is now a parched desert, strewn with rubble and weeds.

Bellbird Park Preservation Group member Maria Hayes said the noise, dust, and loss of trees caused by the works had been made more distressing because of the wasteland left in its wake.

"I am not anti-development and realise the work was needed, but to leave this awful, ugly mess behind has been upsetting for many of us who come to Bellbird Park for its beauty and nature.

"All we are asking is, when will the trees be replanted on this belt of destruction?"

Division 2 Councillors Paul Tully and Nicole Jonic said they were aware of the situation.

"Council officers are currently in discussions with officers of Urban Utilities in relation to a revegetation plan," a Council spokesman said.

Urban Utilities said the onus lay on the developer to complete any rehabilitation works.

"Springfield City Group is responsible for ensuring that all Southeast Queensland code, legislation and other relevant conditions are met, and that reinstatement works are agreed between Springfield City Group and the local Council," the Urban Utilities spokeswoman said.

"Discussions between Urban Utilities, Springfield City Group and Ipswich City Council are continuing."

Springfield City Group was sought for answers but did not respond.

- Currently, three separate referrals for new developments at Bellbird Park have been lodged with Federal Environment Minister Tania Plibersek.

They are under review as part of the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act.

One of those developments is on 64.7ha for more than a thousand homes.

The Act is supposed to ensure that "nationally significant animals, plants, habitats and places are identified, and any potential negative impacts on them are carefully considered before changes in land use or new developments are approved".

Bellbird Park was once a popular destination for early botanists and naturalists in the 1890s who visited Woogaroo Creek and Goodna scrub which extended from Brisbane River to Goodna and upstream.

The lower reaches of Opossum Creek still contain rare, fragmented patches of disturbed rainforest.