

19 January 2026

The Hon. Paul Scully, MP
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Email: [Contact the Minister](#)

Dear Minister Scully

At the meeting of 16 December 2025, the elected Council of City of Newcastle (CN) carried the following resolution.

F. Writes to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Minister for the Environment, and relevant agencies seeking a joint meeting with the Lord Mayor or Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Adamczyk, Council's Director of Planning and Environment, and representatives of the Link Road Forest Campaign to discuss the proposal for a National Park.

I have attached a copy of Council's resolution for your reference.

CN requests this joint meeting to discuss the NSW Government acquiring Eden Estates for the purpose of a National Park.

Eden Estates comprises 574 hectares of land at 144 Boundary Road, Wallsend, 35-35B Frederick Street and 1 Glendon Crescent, Glendale. The land is located in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie Local Government Areas (LGAs). The NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) is currently undertaking a State-led rezoning process for this land.

A significant portion of the site within the Newcastle LGA is known to contain High Environmental Value (HEV) land, particularly south of Link Road. Additionally, the NSW Government has mapped much of the site, including the northern part above Link Road as HEV land. The site contains threatened fauna, flora and ecological communities that have been identified in previous site-specific studies undertaken by Anderson Environment and Planning (AEP) in 2021, LGA wide vegetation type mapping undertaken by CN in 2025, and koala data collected by the Hunter Wildlife Rescue in 2025, as follows:

Threatened fauna

- Koala (Hunter Wildlife Rescue 2025)
- Squirrel Glider (AEP 2021)
- Powerful Owl (AEP 2021)
- Grey-headed Flying-fox (AEP 2021)
- Southern Myotis (AEP 2021)
- Masked Owl (AEP 2021)
- Square-tailed Kite (AEP 2021)
- Little Eagle (AEP 2021)
- Glossy Black-Cockatoo (AEP 2021)
- Little Bent-winged Bat (AEP 2021)
- Large Bent-winged Bat (AEP 2021)

Threatened ecological communities

- Lower Hunter Spotted Gum Ironbark Forest in the Sydney Basin and NSW North Coast Bioregions (CN 2025)
- Swamp Sclerophyll Forest on Coastal Floodplains of the New South Wales North Coast, Sydney Basin and South East Corner Bioregions (CN 2025)

Threatened flora

- Slaty Red Gum (AEP 2021)
- Black-eyed Susan (AEP 2021)
- Small-flower Grevillea (AEP 2021)
- Netted Bottle Brush (AEP 2021)
- Scrub Turpentine (AEP 2021)

CN has previously resolved to recognise and protect the ecological values in the southern portion below Link Road through the Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) Update 2025 and by requesting that DPHI consider opportunities for conservation zoning of the site. This aligns with Strategy 6.2 of the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 which relates to conserving HEV land and biodiversity corridors.

There is strong community interest in protecting the ecological values of this site. During the LSPS consultation process, ninety-nine per cent of submissions supported the conservation of the HEV areas within Eden Estates land, reflecting substantial community sentiment towards biodiversity protection and the retention of bushland at this site. CN also notes the emerging evidence of koala populations in the broader area.

A recent drone survey conducted by CN confirmed likely resident koala populations in the nearby Blue Gum Hills Regional Park and Stockrington State Conservation Area within the Newcastle LGA. CN is also aware of recent surveys by the University of Newcastle in Stockrington and Sugarloaf State Conservation Areas, located in the Cessnock and Lake Macquarie LGAs, which identified significant koala numbers that were previously underestimated. These findings, and koala rescue data collected by Hunter Wildlife Rescue, suggest a substantial koala population may exist across Newcastle, Cessnock, and Lake Macquarie LGAs supported by this interconnected bushland.

CN wrote to the Minister for Environment on 15 December 2025 bringing the findings of recent koala surveys to their attention and requesting the inclusion of Blue Gum Hills Regional Park, Sugarloaf and Stockrington State Conservation Areas into the NSW Great Koala National Park. CN also wrote to DPHI on 19 December 2025, requesting that thermal surveys be undertaken on the Eden Estates site to confirm koala presence and identify HEV land.

Members of the Link Road Forest Campaign have advised CN that koalas have recently been recorded on the Eden Estates site through sightings and surveys. Eden Estates is recognised as suitable koala habitat and is likely to support additional individuals while functioning as a critical movement corridor for koalas and other threatened species. This role will become increasingly important as the adjacent Minmi Estate is developed.

The Minmi Estate development will result in extensive clearing of bushland and koala habitat, enabled through the Major Project Concept Plan approval (MP10_0090 – Northern Estate) issued by the NSW Planning Assessment Commission in 2013. This approval did not provide adequate functional biodiversity corridors to be retained on the site that would allow for landscape scale connectivity between bushland parcels and State Conservation Areas. As this clearing and development occurs, surrounding bushland within Eden Estates, Blue Gum Hills National Park, Summerhill Waste Management Centre, and conservation land retained at 505 Minmi Road, Fletcher, will become the only remaining bushland that can provide functional corridors linking bushland in north-east Lake Macquarie and south-west Newcastle to the Watagan–Stockton regional biodiversity

corridor. The conservation of bushland at Eden Estate is therefore critical in preserving threatened species.

I trust that you will consider this matter and provide a response at your earliest convenience, including a suitable date for this meeting to occur. It is requested that your office liaise with agencies within your portfolio to seek their attendance at the meeting, where relevant.

Should you require any further information on this matter, please contact Michelle Bisson, Executive Director Planning and Environment, at mbisson@ncc.nsw.gov.au or 4974 2793.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JB' or similar, with a stylized flourish.

Jeremy Bath

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Attach – NOM 16/12/25 – Support for the Link Road Forest Campaign

ACTION ITEM
Ordinary Council Meeting
Tuesday, 16 December 2025

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR THE LINK ROAD FOREST CAMPAIGN

Councillor Johnson left the meeting for discussion of the item.

MOTION

Moved by: Councillor Richardson, Seconded by: Councillor Adamczyk

That Council:

- A. Notes the presentation from the Link Road Forest Campaign at the Public Briefing on 2 December 2025 regarding the proposal for the Link Road Forest to become a National Park, along with the background information provided to Councillors on the ecological significance of the bushland, the identified High Environmental Value (HEV) of the southern parcel and potential HEV of the northern parcel, the presence of koala habitat, and the history of the site and Eden Estates within the planning process.
- B. Receives the formal request from the Link Road Forest Campaign dated 2 December 2025 (Attachment A), and resolves to formally endorse the Link Road Forest Campaign's goal for the State Government's acquisition of the 574 ha Link Road Forest lands for permanent conservation as National Park, or other suitable conservation.
- C. Refers the matter of an appropriate name for the area currently known as Link Road Forest to the Guraki Committee for advice, noting the potential renaming should the land become a National Park or similar protected area.
- D. Requests a report from Council officers on the social, economic and environmental benefits associated with the Link Road Forest becoming a National Park or protected area. The report should also outline implications and opportunities for community engagement and advocacy.
- E. Requests a further brief report from Council officers on the biodiversity offset requirements of the Hunter Transmission Project, and the potential for these offsets to support funding for the acquisition of Link Road Forest.
- F. Writes to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Minister for the Environment, and relevant agencies seeking a joint meeting with the Lord Mayor or Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Adamczyk, Council's Director of Planning and Environment, and representatives of the Link Road Forest Campaign to discuss the proposal for a National Park.

AMENDMENT

Moved by: Deputy Lord Mayor McCabe

Add Point G:

G. Writes to the Mayor of Lake Macquarie Council advising him of the support of Newcastle Councillors for the aims of the Link Road Forest campaign and invites Lake Macquarie Councillors to a joint planning workshop on this issue in early 2026.

The mover and seconder of the motion accepted the Deputy Lord Mayor's amendment to the motion.

The motion moved by Councillor Richardson and seconded by Councillor Adamczyk, as amended by Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McCabe was put to the meeting.

MOTION

Moved by: Councillor Richardson, Seconded by: Councillor Adamczyk

A. That Council:

B.

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- G. Writes to the Mayor of Lake Macquarie Council advising him of the support of Newcastle Councillors for the aims of the Link Road Forest campaign and invites Lake Macquarie Councillors to a joint planning workshop on this issue in early 2026.

For the Motion:

Councillors Adamczyk, Brooker, Clausen, Gittins, Isherwood, Johnson, Richardson, Winney-Baartz

Against the Motion:

Councillors Barrie and Pull

Carried

Councillor Johnson returned to the meeting at the conclusion of the item.