

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF NSW - Community Information and Action Sheet

# ST MARYS WOODLANDS

## 8000 HOMES OR A 1500 HECTARE REGIONAL PARK?

### Last chance to save bushland!!

The 1538 hectare Australian Defence Industries (ADI) property at St Marys is a bushland oasis within western Sydney's rapidly expanding suburbia. Its clay and alluvial soils support large areas of rare and endangered native vegetation which is very different in character from Sydney's better known sandstone bushland and has been largely cleared for agriculture and housing elsewhere. Less than 10% of its original coverage remains. ADI St Marys is one of the region's major habitats for native birds and animals and is large enough to maintain ecosystem integrity, resilience and viability.

### Why this bushland is special!

**FLORA:** The site is of outstanding regional conservation significance. It supports one of the largest remnants of the endangered Cumberland Plain Woodlands and a range of other rare and endangered bushland including Castlereagh, Grey Box and Paperbark Swamp Woodlands; River Flat Forest, and small wetlands and sedgeland. Most of these are inadequately represented in existing conservation reserves. 25% of the known 190 plant species are rare or vulnerable.

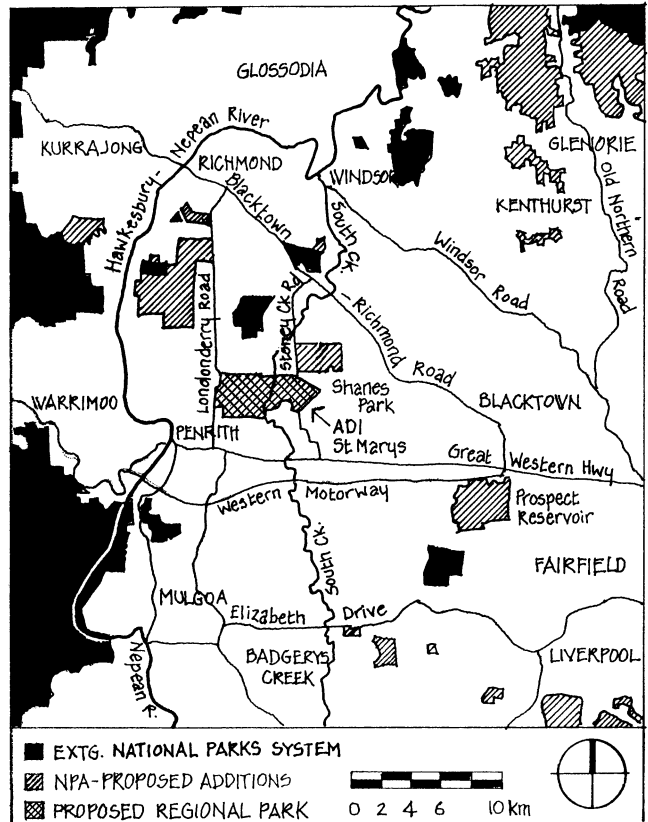
**FAUNA:** A highly diverse native fauna includes 110 bird species, 9 mammal, 10 reptile and 8 frog species (including the endangered Green and Golden Bell Frog) and over 40 species of jewel beetles.

**HABITAT CORRIDOR:** The site is a vital and central part of habitat and wildlife corridors linking other Cumberland Plain bushland fragments. The Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Trust has developed a proposal for a 3500 ha open space system which includes ADI St Marys, Shanes Park bushland to the north-east, and the NSW Government-owned South Creek and Ropes Creek corridors to the south.

**IT'S BEAUTIFUL:** It acts as green 'lungs' for an increasingly urbanised western Sydney, helping to maintain local air quality. It provides visual refreshment!

### Threats to bushland values

Although 800 hectares are listed by the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) for environmental protection on the Register of the National Estate, and environment groups and Penrith Council are united in their demands for a regional park over the whole site, the Federal Government wants to capitalise it and the NSW Government intends to develop a billion dollar housing estate for 8000 homes. This would destroy 300 ha of endangered vegetation and retain a conservation zone of only 630 ha which would be vulnerable to urban pressures like storm-water runoff, weed invasion, rubbish dumping and domestic animals.



### Why it *must* be a regional park!

- Owned by a Commonwealth-owned company, it is public land, **all of which** should be available to the public as a public park!!
- Prevent the NSW and Federal Governments from dishonouring their own threatened species protection legislation and AHC listings in favour of short-term profits which override social, environmental and sustainable economic benefits to local communities of 'ordinary Australians.'
- Retain a green open space area for both nature conservation and passive recreation. These are desperately needed in Western Sydney which lacks urban bushland and parks and can't support the environmental load of further large-scale urban development.
- Protect outstanding regional biodiversity, air and water quality, and the water catchment of South Creek. Increasing soil salinity is a major problem in western Sydney, so it is vital to protect native vegetation and keep the water table down.

In January 2001 the NSW Government approved *Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No. 30 – St Marys* that allows the \$2 billion Lend Lease development, including 8,000 homes, to proceed. Thousands of submissions to the draft plan that called for the site's full protection were ignored. Only 630 ha is proposed as a regional park.

This regional park is too small and convoluted to provide long-term protection for the site's outstanding animals and plants and for regional recreation.

**It's not too late for the NSW Government to overturn their decision or for the Federal Government to stop the transfer of the land to the developers.**

**WRITE LETTERS TO OR RING the following people urging their action for a Regional Park:**

**Federal Environment Minister** Senator Robert Hill, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

**NSW Premier** Bob Carr and **NSW Ministers for Environment** and **Urban Affairs and Planning** Bob Debus and Dr Andrew Refshauge, Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney 2000 opposing urban development here and requesting a regional park.

**Federal Member for Chifley** Roger Price at his electoral office in Shop 3 Daniel Thomas Plaza, Mount Druitt 2770. Ph 9625-4344. Fax 9832-2641.

**Federal Member for Lindsay** Ms Jackie Kelly, PO Box 712, Penrith 2750. Ph 4732 2844. Fax 4732 2640.

**NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service** Director-General, Brian Gilligan, PO Box 1967 Hurstville 2220.