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Rob Stokes
Minister for Planning and Environment
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY
NSW 2000

19-Jan-2016

Dear Mr Stokes,

Cross border environmental committee for West Belconnen development.

We are writing to you to point out the need for an independent cross border committee to be convened to consider environmental issues in relation to the proposed West Belconnen urban development which straddles the ACT/NSW border.

To date neither the ACT or NSW governments have shown any interest in the establishment of such a committee. We think this is a grave dereliction of responsibility on the part of both governments. Given that this development is the first cross border development of its kind it will set a precedent for all future such developments so a rigorous legislative framework needs to be put in place. While we commend the current developer Riverview Pty Ltd on the amount of public consultation they have undertaken regarding environmental issues it is nevertheless a very poor precedent for future cross border developments that environmental issues are left solely to the developer with both ACT and NSW governments effectively washing their hands of environmental issues.

The responses to our calls for a cross border environmental issue have fallen on deaf ears. Both the NSW and ACT Planning departments seem well able to cooperate in detail as regards servicing arrangements for the proposed development but are keen to side step environmental issues. In response to our letter to the NSW Dept of Planning and Environment (24-Sep-2015) requesting that the Gateway Determination

for the development be withdrawn and reissued with requirements of an independent cross border forum to consider environmental issues the Acting Executive Director stated that:

“ As the Gateway determination has already been issued , your request cannot be accommodated. The planning proposal does however contain information and strategies for addressing environmental issues as part of the future development of the site”

The ACT Minister for Planning , Mick Gentleman has said :

“variation (DV351) and is an ongoing issue that requires in-depth discussions between the ACT and NSW”
and “this includes the requirement for a Cross Border Government Servicing Report that addresses service delivery and recovery of costs. Work on the Servicing Report has commenced and will continue in the coming months” .

Environmental issue are left solely the purview of the developer.

In that situation we would like the NSW Gateway Determination to be withdrawn and reissued with requirements for environmental issues to be subject to a forum of independent experts and the recommendations of such a forum be made binding conditions of the development.

We look forward to your response and hope you can give your support to the establishment of an independent cross border environmental committee. The setting up of a rigorous legislative framework for this and future cross border urban proposals has evident long term benefit.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Chris Watson
President, Ginninderra Falls Association

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