

Central North Field Naturalists Inc.
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The General Manager
Devonport City Council
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Representation from Central North Field Naturalists
Application Number PA2022.0024 Objection
Amendment - AM2022.01 Objection

The Central North Field Naturalists (CNFN Inc.) is a community group dedicated to the exploration and preservation of Tasmania's natural environment with several members resident in Devonport. We are placing before Council our formal objection to the application PA2022.0024 to remove bushland for the development of a 7 lot subdivision at 133 Middle Road, Miandetta. We also object to amendments AM2022.01. In particular we stress that Priority Vegetation Overlays should be retained, especially for proposed Lots 4 (the proposed General Residential Zone) and 7 (the proposed Open Space Zone).

Our group has long been concerned about the continued clearing and fragmentation of remnant bushland in Tasmania and the associated threats to important habitats for plants, birds, mammals, reptiles, frogs, invertebrates fungi, lichens and slime moulds, all of which play crucial roles in the ecosystem. Our concerns have been vindicated through the recently released 'State of the Environment 2021' report for Australia which paints a grim picture of further declines in the health of Australia's plants, animals and ecosystems. The report, authored by leading environmental scientists including some from CSIRO lists habitat destruction and land clearing for urban sprawl as one of the main threats to nature and our environment.

A perusal of Devonport City Council's website indicates that environmental considerations are taken seriously. For instance, Goal number 1.2.1 of Devonport's Strategic Plan 2009-2030 'Living Lightly on our Environment' states that the Council will 'support the conservation and maintenance of biodiversity including coastal landscapes and preservation of areas of remnant vegetation'. Also, when announcing Devonport's membership of Cities Power Partnership (Australia's largest network of Councils providing mutual support and encouragement to assist with the mitigation and adaptation to the impacts of climate change), Mayor Annette Rockliff explained that action must be taken to prevent 'ecosystem collapse'.

By protecting a variety of ecosystems and acting as a carbon sink, Devonport's bushland areas are an indispensable component of the Council's stated endeavours to protect Devonport's environment into the future.

The Council has also just announced its annual tree planting program for parks and streets throughout our community, a recognition that trees beautify urban areas. Devonport's bushland has for many years provided amenity for the residents of Devonport, beautiful natural areas for people to view and enjoy.

However, during recent months, native vegetation has continued to be destroyed on both private and public land in Devonport including the clearance of a large area of Eucalyptus

and Melaleuca forest to the west of Friend Street at the Homemaker Centre, careless removal of vegetation in the Don Reserve by Council workers and contractors not trained in bush care and the felling of important habitat trees on Don College land. All reserves, both public and private, large and small, are crucial to the maintenance of biodiversity. To keep these reserves viable and maintain species diversity, it is important that they are protected and treasured.

Devonport is fortunate to have two publicly owned reserves, the Don reserve and Kelcey Tier Green Belt but, in order to remain viable, they must be connected by wildlife corridors and flyways.

The bushland at 133 Middle Road, Miandetta forms part of a wildlife corridor stretching from the Mersey River to the Kelcey Tier Green Belt via the remaining bushland on the opposite side of Stony Rise Road (number 57 Stony Rise Road). Page 68 of the Application claims that the retention of bush on Lot 7, the proposed Open Space Zone will offset the removal of native vegetation from Lot 4, the proposed General Residential Zone. There are two problems with this; firstly, 'offsets' must ensure there is no net loss of vegetation, therefore the offset must protect a similar block of land that was earmarked for clearing that will now be protected; secondly, a large part of Lot 7 acts as a transmission line easement and therefore will never support large trees in the numbers found on Lot 4. Lot 7 is also infested with weeds including Spanish Heath (which may have spread from a hillside covered with Spanish Heath and Gorse nearby to the south) and blackberries.

In addition to acting as a wildlife corridor, Lots 4 and 7 are also a permanent home for native fauna and flora. The Natural Values Report for the application identifies a small stand of *Eucalyptus ovata* on Lot 4. These trees are important fodder trees for the critically endangered Swift Parrots which are known to feed and nest in the Kelcey Tier Green Belt. The Central North Burrowing Crayfish has also been located on Lot 4. The report claims that these trees and the crayfish chimneys would be protected, however, both are part of an ecosystem and are unlikely to be safe in an isolated pocket while the surrounding bush is destroyed for a residential development. Devonport's urban bushland is also home to other threatened species including the Eastern Barred Bandicoot and Tasmanian Devil.

Rather than approving the destruction of yet more bushland, there is an economic opportunity for Devonport Council to promote ecotourism in the city area by purchasing and caring for remaining bush lots. Many visitors come to Tasmania to experience our natural areas, they would likely be encouraged to stay longer in Devonport if offered the opportunity to experience our native fauna and flora in easily accessible, well maintained reserves which include interpretive signage and guided tours.

Well maintained bushland reserves preserving biodiversity will also become an important educational tool for local schools and colleges teaching young people why it is vital to care for and value their natural environment.

It is essential therefore that Devonport's remaining remnant bush lands are protected.

Sincerely,



Robert Read
President, Central North Field Naturalist Inc.