

NOVOSOCIETY

## Plan sparks wildlife concerns

*A proposal to rezone almost 600 hectares of bushland along Newcastle Link Road has raised concerns about the threat it poses to more than 50 different species of flora and fauna.*

by **Hayley McMahon** July 27, 2021



The 570 hectares along Newcastle Link Rd that is proposed for rezoning to facilitate a housing development. Photo Supplied: Jo Lynch

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The proposed rezoning along the Newcastle Link Road would facilitate a housing development called Eden Estates planned by Johnson Property Group. Image supplied: Jo Lynch

The Hunter Community Environment Centre (HCEC) and the Hunter Bird Observers Club (HBOC) are hosting an online public meeting on August 4 to discuss the proposal to rezone 570 hectares of bushland from Wallsend to Minmi.

The proposed rezoning along the Newcastle Link Road would facilitate a housing development called Eden Estates planned by Johnson Property Group. City of Newcastle is expected to consider the proposal later this year.

HCEC coordinator Jo Lynch said there was an immense amount of flora, fauna and critical habitats on the site that the proposed rezoning and development would threaten.

“There are over 50 flora and fauna species on the site that are listed as vulnerable or endangered, including squirrel gliders, bent-wing bats, powerful owls, flying foxes and native orchids,” Lynch said.



Squirrel Glider, Photo sourced: Gregory Millen, Australian Museum

“It is an essential habitat for squirrel gliders, which is a species we have been focusing on a lot. They need connectivity of bushland and hollow trees to survive.

“We want to raise awareness over the important biodiversity at this site and make sure that all checks are implemented, and the full picture has been assessed before the council just whisk it through.”

The public meeting will feature presenters from HCEC, HBOC and local ecologists speaking on the site’s biodiversity and the vital nature corridor that links Lake Macquarie and Newcastle’s urban bushland.

“So, the first hurdle is tackling the rezoning as this is the next step on the proposal,” Lynch said.

Image supplied: Jo Lynch

“Ideally, we would like to see the development that is planned for this site relocated to land that has already been cleared. We want to avoid clearing established bushland wherever we can across the Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Central Coast electorates.

“We know that there is a high demand for housing, but we must think twice about the need for land clearing when there are a lot of very vulnerable species endangered.”

Lynch said they wanted to gauge the broader community’s thoughts about the proposal and if it was an issue people were willing to take up further with the City of Newcastle.

For more information on the development or to RSVP to the meeting, visit the **[Hunter Community Environment Centre website](#)**.

The online public meeting will be held via Zoom on August 4 at 5.30pm.