

**The Hon. Mark Speakman, MP
Minister for Environment PO
PO Box 125, Cronulla, 2230**

27 January 2016

RE: Proposed development and widening of access road in Spring Gully, Bundeena

To The Minister,

I am writing this submission on behalf of the Sutherland Group of the Australian Plants Society to request that you do not approve the proposed road widening for a new two lane road, at the entrance to the Royal Coast Track, associated with the proposed recreational camp on the land known as Spring Gully, Bundeena.

The Australian Plants Society is an active community organisation that supports and promotes the preservation and conservation of Australian native plants. Sutherland Group is a long-established, active community group with members committed to conserving Australian native plants in the Sutherland Shire. I am the Conservation Officer for Sutherland Group and am a professional botanical consultant, with expertise in vegetation assessment and ecological significance of vegetation.

This letter follows up active participation by our group in the defence of the ecological values of Spring Gully. I, along with other Sutherland group members, provided evidence for the Land and Environment Court Section 34 conference in November last year and addressed the court directly, stating our concerns for the impacts to endangered ecological communities and fauna, that will occur if the development is approved.

The land has recently being reported as containing the listed State and Commonwealth endangered ecological community *Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub* by Professor David Keith of the University of NSW. This EEC was previously thought to occur only north of Botany Bay. We advocate the inclusion of this land into the Royal estate, which would ensure its protection and resilience into the long term. In addition, a second endangered ecological community, *Coastal Upland Swamp*, also adjoins the current road. This EEC is protected at both the State and Commonwealth level and will also be impacted by any proposed road widening. This particular EEC lies on soils which provide data on historic landscape formation. These soils are also sensitive to perturbation and altered drainage regimes .

Upgrading the entrance road to Spring Gully will result in unacceptable impacts to these legally protected entities, adjoining one of the most important Australian conservation areas, the Royal National Park, now proposed for world heritage listing.

Our group strongly encourages the Minister to reject the proposed road widening on national park estate at Spring Gully, so that this development cannot proceed.

Yours Sincerely

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