



PO Box 295 Vincentia NSW 2540 | www.birdlifeshoalhaven.org | shoalhaven@birdlife.org.au
BirdLife Shoalhaven is a branch of BirdLife Australia Limited ABN 75 149 124 774

Ms Kate McCue,
Manager, Corporate Affairs,
Endeavour Energy,
PO Box 811,
Seven Hills NSW 2148

30 May 2019

By email to: news@endeavourenergy.com.au, vegetationcontrolenquiry@endeavourenergy.com.au
CC: Mr Stephen Dunshea, Acting General Manager, Shoalhaven City Council
By email to: council@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au

RE: TREE REMOVAL BY ENDEAVOUR ENERGY IN THE SHOALHAVEN

Dear Ms McCue,

Birdlife Australia (BLA) is Australia's largest bird conservation organisation with over 145,000 members and supporters. For over a century its members have protected birds and their habitats, through practical conservation and advocacy based on the best available science. BirdLife Shoalhaven (BLS) is a branch of BirdLife Australia with over 700 supporters. The major part of our charter is to advocate for the conservation of birdlife in the Shoalhaven.

We are aware that a number of Shoalhaven property owners, including BLS supporters, have received correspondence outlining intended tree removal under powerlines by Endeavour Energy (EE). It has subsequently been stated that approximately 800 trees will be removed in the Shoalhaven. BLS is alarmed by this proposal and seeks an opportunity to talk with you to discuss the matter.

Urban birds are a priority suite of species for BLA and are currently the subject of a Conservation Action Plan to stop their decline. One of the key threats to urban birds is the removal of individual trees and bushland. Particularly important in this context is the loss of large, hollow-bearing trees. A significant proportion of Australian birds and other wildlife use hollows for breeding, and hollows typically only form in eucalypts over ~120 years old. Trees of this age and size are therefore irreplaceable for two generations and every effort should be made to retain them. But it is not only older trees that are vital for urban birds. A number of bird species rely upon dense foliage cover for shade, protection from predators, roosting sites and nesting sites. All trees therefore need to be protected, yet in the Shoalhaven we are experiencing rapid – often unjustified - removal of trees in many areas, which is already associated with a decline in habitat and corridor values for birdlife.

Further, urban trees comprise, to a greater or lesser degree in various locales, important bird habitat and associated corridors for movement, feeding and resting. That movement for birds will be inside the urban area but also between urban areas and bushland. On that basis damage and/or

destruction of trees will impact the value to birds. That can be particularly so with the smaller bird species which rely on the proximity of trees for easier and protected movement. This in turn impacts on the bird biodiversity of urban and peri-urban areas. The corridors may be important links between sections of reserves and national parks.

We are greatly concerned that EE is not giving these community assets the respects that they deserve, and that decisions to remove trees are being made without adequate consideration of the consequences to wildlife or human populations.

Beyond the importance to wildlife, remnant trees and bushland are what makes the Shoalhaven a remarkable and high-quality place to live. It is now widely accepted that nature in urban and peri-urban areas is extremely important for human physical and mental wellbeing. In addition, trees are one of the cheapest ways that we have of cooling urban areas and protecting people against extreme heat. Trees also increase property values – hence the term ‘leafy suburb’.

To summarise, EE is currently engaged in a process that is making our villages less liveable, will have negative impacts on birds, other wildlife, human wellbeing and health and is likely to reduce the value of residents’ properties.

We urge you to abandon the tree removal program, and instead use your considerable skills and resources to develop a means by which your goals can be met without removal of trees. Further, we encourage you to work with SCC to expand tree cover in urban areas throughout the Shoalhaven.

BLS is willing to talk to you further to discuss these issues at your convenience.

We look forward to your response on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Dunn', is positioned above the typed name.

Rob Dunn, President

T: 0438 250 600

E: president@shoalhaven.org