

Friday 4 November 2011

**Growth Centres Biodiversity Offset Program**  
**Response given to *Sunday Telegraph***

**1. When was the biodiversity offset fund set up, by whom and for what purpose?**

*Department of Planning and Infrastructure response:*

The Growth Centres Biodiversity Offset Program was established in 2008 as part of a package of conservation measures delivered by the NSW Government to offset the impacts on biodiversity as Sydney's Growth Centres are developed.

The Growth Centres SEPP was the first land use plan in NSW to be granted biodiversity certification under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*.

The biodiversity certification provided a strategic approach to managing conservation and threatened species in the Growth Centres and included the establishment of a conservation fund to of some \$530 million for conservation purposes over the next 30 years.

The biodiversity certification specifies that the fund will be used for:

- Biodiversity conservation and regional open space purposes within the Growth Centres;
- To acquire other land and/or enter into conservation agreements for the primary purpose of biodiversity conservation, with a priority on acquiring this land in the Cumberland Plain/ western Sydney region.

**2. Who is the levy collected from? How much is collected from each developer?**

*Department of Planning and Infrastructure response:*

The money in the conservation fund comes from two sources:

- A special infrastructure contribution which is paid by developers/ land owners on development in the Growth Centres;
- General government revenue.

It is intended that 12.6 per cent of the funds collected by the Growth Centres SIC, over the life of the scheme, will go into the conservation fund.

**3. Have any levies been collected yet and where from? How much is in the fund to date?**

*Department of Planning and Infrastructure response:*

Since the creation of the fund, \$3.9 million has been allocated to the fund (up to June 2011) from the two sources identified above.

The conservation fund annual allocation is based on the rate of development that occurs in the Growth Centres. As development increases, so does the annual allocation to the conservation fund.