Response to the Newcastle Herald on Wallarah 2 assessment process (6 August 2014)

From a Department of Planning & Environment spokesperson:

Where an application involves a State Conservation Area, landowner’s consent from the Minister for the Environment in the form of a letter is requested before the determination can proceed.

This is a statutory requirement which enables the Department of Planning and Environment to carry out a merit assessment of the proposal and does not reflect the department’s position on the proposal.

Satisfying the requirement also allows the independent Planning Assessment Commission to determine the proposal. This is done at arm’s length from government, with a strong focus on community input.

The communication between officers of the Department of Planning and Environment and the Office of Environment and Heritage does not bypass the transparent, rigorous and independent assessment process.

Information on the letter should be sought from OEH.

Department media unit: (02) 9228 6128