

Camden Residents' Action Group

Incorporated

Camden – Still a Country Town

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2 August 2024

Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP

Minister for the Environment and Water

House of Representatives, Parliament House

PO Box 6022

Canberra ACT 2600

Cc.

Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC

Minister for the Environment, Parliament House

Macquarie Street, SYDNEY NSW 2000

Mrs Sally Quinnell MP

PO Box 1084, NARELLAN NSW 2567

Hon. Angus Taylor MP

PO Box 6022

House of Representatives, Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister Plibersek,

We are writing to draw your attention to the requirements of the Australian government's Approved Recovery Plan¹ and adopted conservation advice² for *Pimelea spicata* which is listed as endangered under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth) (EPBC Act) and in New South Wales under Schedule 1 of the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 (TSC Act).

According to the entry on your Department's website for the Approved Recovery Plan:

¹ Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water *Pimelea spicata* Approved Recovery Plan (January 2006) <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/biodiversity/threatened/recovery-plans/national-recovery-plan-pimelea-spicata#daff-page-main>

² Threatened Species Scientific Committee Established under the EPBC Act 1999 *Conservation Advice Pimelea spicata* Ministerially approved 15 July 2016
<https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/species/pubs/20834-conservation-advice-15072016.pdf>

This document constitutes the formal Commonwealth and New South Wales State Recovery Plan for the small shrub Pimelea spicata (Thymelaeaceae), and as such considers the conservation requirements of the species across its known range. It identifies the future actions to be taken to ensure the long-term viability of P. spicata in nature and the parties who will carry out these actions. This national Recovery Plan for Pimelea spicata, details the species' distribution and biology, conservation status, threats, and recovery objectives and actions necessary to ensure its long-term survival.

The Approved Recovery Plan (January 2006) states at *Section 12 Review Date* (p. 24) that the recovery plan is to be formally reviewed and updated five years from its publication. It has now been 18 years since the plan was created. The approved Conservation advice (15 July 2016) states that a major threat to the Pimelea spicata is land clearing or land use change and that, in accordance with the EPBC Act and the TSC Act, habitat assessments be conducted prior to assessing development or rezoning applications that affect known or potential occurrences or habitats of the species.

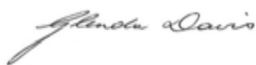
Our interest stems from the proposed major development at Studley Park (DA/2023/526/1), valued at \$118,219,260, which is situated as an island within Camden golf course. As stated in the *Approved Recovery Plan (section 7.3 In-situ protection)* a conservation agreement under the *Endangered Species Protection Act 1992 (ESP Act 1992)* was signed in March 1994 for two parcels of Commonwealth land used for the golf course. The agreement is between the Commonwealth Government and Camden Golf Club Limited (lessee of land) and remained valid when the ESP Act 1992 was superseded by the EPBC Act 1999. The conservation agreement provides for the conservation and management of Pimelea spicata and its habitat to ensure the species long term survival at the site which is home to what is currently considered to be its largest known population in the country.

The developer's Biodiversity Development Assessment Report shows that Pimelea spicata has spread beyond the area of the conservation agreement, and the proposed development will remove a number of individual plants. Clearly the development and ongoing activity will adversely affect the habitat.

The community disputes the downplaying of the development's impact, suggesting the developer has underestimated the effect of placing a 44-bed hotel and 148 apartments in such close proximity to the endangered species both within the area of the conservation agreement and its spread.

We ask as a matter of urgency that the National Recovery Plan be reviewed and that assessment of the ongoing impacts on habitat of the proposed development be required so that the development consent authorities and the community are fully informed.

Yours faithfully,



Glenda Davis

President



Australian Government

Department of Climate Change, Energy,
the Environment and Water

MC24-016229

Ms Glenda Davis
PRESIDENT
Camden Residents' Action Group
PO Box 188
CAMDEN NSW 2570

glenda@davisco.com.au

Dear Ms Davis

Thank you for your letter to the Minister for the Environment and Water, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, concerning the endangered Spiked Rice-flower (*Pimelea spicata*). Minister Plibersek has asked me to thank you for your correspondence and to reply.

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water acknowledges your concerns regarding the proposed major development at Studley Park on the Camden Golf Club and appreciates your interest in the protection of Spiked Rice-flower.

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* 1999 (EPBC Act) is national legislation that protects native flora and fauna and important places. Where an action is likely to have a significant impact on a nationally protected matter (as outlined in [Significant Impact Guidelines](#)), that action must be referred to the department for consideration and a decision by the Minister or their delegate as to whether approval is required.

National Recovery Plans set out what must be done to protect and restore important populations of threatened plants and animals and how to manage and reduce threatening processes. National Recovery Plans are important in deciding whether, or not, a development can be approved to proceed.

Whilst the National Recovery Plan for *Pimelea spicata* (2006) identifies a review period of five years, the current version remains valid and must be considered when a decision on development is made under the EPBC Act. In conjunction with the *Pimelea spicata* Conservation Advice (2016), it provides guidance for the consideration of actions under the EPBC Act and more broadly on actions to support the long-term recovery of the species.

The department has not received a referral under the EPBC Act in relation to the proposed development at Studley Park, and as such no approvals have been contemplated or issued. I have asked my team to contact the organisation proposing the development to ensure they understand their obligations under the EPBC Act.

Thank you again for bringing your concerns to the Government's attention.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kate Gowland', with a large, sweeping initial 'K'.

Kate Gowland
Branch Head
Environment Assessments (NSW, ACT)

2 September 2024