



MEDIA RELEASE
March 9, 2011

MAIN ROADS WA 'Road to nowhere' threatens endangered species habitat

Conservationists are calling on Main Roads WA to withdraw a proposal¹ to bulldoze a road into prime endangered species habitat in the Kimberley. The road would be built for the proposed gas refineries at James Price Point for Woodside, Shell, BP, Chevron and BHP.

The proposed road would clear 280 hectares of pristine Kimberley bushland according to the Main Roads application to the Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke. Evidence of Bilbies, an endangered species, has been found in surveys nearby.

"Main Roads need to withdraw this proposal or the Minister for the Environment needs to reject it." said Environs Kimberley Director Martin Pritchard.

The Federal Government is not expected to make a decision on the gas proposal until the end of the year and Woodside and its joint venture partners will not make a decision until late 2012.

"There has been no decision on the gas refineries and there's no certainty they will go ahead here on the Kimberley coast so we can't see why Main Roads WA would be wanting to build a road into prime endangers species habitat." Mr Pritchard said.

"This road would threaten the Greater Bilby according to information in the Federal Governments 'National Recovery Plan for the Greater Bilby'² by opening up Bilby habitat to predators such as dogs and feral cats, directly destroying habitat and due to roadkill if the road was built." said Mr Pritchard.

The proposal would also potentially threaten another endangered species, the Gouldian Finch.

"The Main Roads proposal hasn't conducted adequate surveys to find out where Bilbies and Gouldian Finch might occur. They only looked for animals in the daytime as they were doing their plant surveys, we know that Bilbies only come out at night." said Mr Pritchard.

"If Main Roads won't withdraw this proposal then the Federal Minister for the Environment must surely reject it. There's very few Bilbies left in Australia and this was one of their strongholds, it looks like they are still clinging on but if the species is to make a comeback then the Minister, Tony Burke, must protect this place otherwise there'll be none left." Mr Pritchard said.

Media Contact - Martin Pritchard – 0427 548 075

¹ Main Roads referral to the Federal Minister for the Environment

http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/epbc/epbc_ap.pl?name=current_referral_detail&proposal_id=5852

²National Recovery Plan for the Greater Bilby (Pages 29 & 32)

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/pubs/m-lagotis.pdf>