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Environmentalists Deb Little, Cr Linda Eisner and Debbie Little stand in a native bushland area that will be destroyed if the RTA's plans for the motorway go ahead. Picture: CHRIS McROBBIN

JOANNE MELLA

ENVIRONMENTALISTS have vowed to be seen in front of bulldozers to stop the RTA's plan to build a tunnel through sensitive remnant bushland at Walls Creek Valley in Earlwood.

The tunnel would be an extension of the M5 East motorway and rise close to the surface near the shabby bend in Johnston St, Earlwood, and proceed beyond Bradley Rd.

The Walls Creek Preservation

Society says the works would destroy a significant section of bushland at the western end of the Two Valley Trail and stall long-running plans to create the Walls Creek Regional Park.

The RTA is determined to proceed with plans because the earmarked land has not been granted to the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

Service spokesman Peter Stevens said the RTA's plans would delay the society's longer

push to have the land gazetted. He said the group had worked for more than four years to restore the area.

An RTA spokesman said it would not back down from plans to use the land for the project.

"What we're doing is further geo-technical work to assess where the tunnel could go," the spokesman said.

"We're still at the feasibility stage. There's lots of work to be done yet."

"We told the preservation society one of the options is that the tunnel could go through that area so we're not backing away from that and we'll go away and do the pre-technical investigation."

Canterbury Greens councillor Linda Eisner said she would descend in front of a bulldozer if development plans advanced.

"I think Walls Creek's worth it," she said. "We're saying it's a terrible idea because it will be the end of the bush."

The society has collected 1200 signatures opposing the proposal.

In 1998 the State Government pledged it would create a regional park (but plans stalled). In September, Canterbury Council agreed to transfer part of the bushland at Earlwood, between Bradley Rd and Waterworth Park, to the NPWS.

The society wants most of the land, most of which is owned by the RTA, Sydney Water and Canterbury Council, to be transferred to the NPWS.

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