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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 15 August 2012 11:11 AM  
**To:** EHPP Landscapes & Ecosystems Section Mailbox  
**Cc:** office@premier.nsw.gov.au; office@parker.minister.nsw.gov.au; Keith Horton  
**Subject:** submission to Native Vegetation Review

To whom it may concern,

We are writing to express our views and concerns about the outcomes to date of the New South Wales Native Vegetation Review, including the draft Native Vegetation Regulations 2012 and draft Private Native Forestry Codes of Practice. We consider these draft documents to represent a clear backward step in relation to current levels of protection for native vegetation.

In the past, NSW has suffered decades of unsustainable land clearing, when millions of hectares of endangered ecological communities, threatened species habitat and wetlands were bulldozed and burned. The NSW Government should uphold strong native vegetation laws to prevent a return to such unsustainable practices.


The key concerns we wish to express are as follows:

- With this review the New South Wales Government is proposing major changes to native vegetation laws. The proposed changes will allow for an increase in land clearing in large parts of the state. This is very disappointing given the need to reduce the level of destruction of native vegetation across the state.
- Native vegetation provides essential environmental, social and economic benefits, including protecting water quality, maintaining soil health and providing wildlife habitat. Our threatened birds, mammals, reptiles and plants are dependent on the important remnant vegetation dotted across heavily cleared landscapes. Each time one of these remnant patches is removed, this displaces or kills yet more creatures and makes it harder for those in other patches to survive. We can't afford to lose more critical areas of bushland.
- The *Native Vegetation Act 2003* has played a vital role in stabilising the extent of native vegetation in New South Wales. The integrity of the legislative scheme is underpinned by the application of detailed regulations and a robust methodology for the assessment of environmental outcomes.
- The changes currently proposed in the draft Native Vegetation Regulation 2012 will place very large areas of native vegetation at risk from unrestrained and unsustainable clearing. They will severely weaken the integrity of these important environment protections and inevitably lead to ongoing destruction and fragmentation of habitat.
- In particular, the proposals to weaken existing protections by allowing clearing of invasive native species and thinning of native vegetation without advice and approval from Catchment Management Authorities has the potential to result in the loss of hundreds of thousands of hectares of native vegetation. While invasive native species pose important environmental

challenges for New South Wales, the proposed approach has potential to do more harm than good.

- Healthy, biodiverse landscapes result in more productive agricultural systems. With the onset of climate change and its associated increase in extreme weather events and temperature fluctuations, conserving native vegetation will benefit biodiversity, farmers and the Australian economy into the future.
- Allowing ecological burning to occur as a routine agricultural management activity has the potential to negatively impact on our flora, fauna and endangered ecological communities as well as threaten life and property. Burning regimes need to be carefully researched to ensure that over-burning does not locally knock out species adapted for less frequent fire.
- Savings in administration costs and reductions in “green tape”, which are a major focus of the fact sheets circulated to stakeholders such as ourselves as part of the consultation process, should not be achieved at the expense of the essential environmental, social and economic benefits provided by native vegetation. The benefits of native vegetation are not in our view adequately considered in the draft Native Vegetation Regulation.

We urge you not to accept proposals which reduce the environmental protections contained in the regulations and significantly weaken the intent of the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*.

Yours truly,  
Dr Emma Rooksby and Dr Keith Horton  
  
Mount Pleasant NSW 2519