

David Butler

Katoomba NSW 2780

24 August 2012

Native Vegetation Regulation Review
Conservation Policy and Strategy Section
Office of Environment and Heritage
Level 12, PO Box A290
Sydney South, NSW 1232

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a resident of the Blue mountains. I Have spent considerable time over the past two decades helping restore degraded land in the Upper Blue Mountains. I'm also a part owner of a large rural property west of the Blue Mountains and have propagated and planted large numbers of trees on that property. As a member of Birdlife Australia I've helped plant trees on properties in the Capertee Valley on the Western edge of the Blue Mountains, as part of an attempt to restore habitat for the Regent Honeyeater and many other endangered woodland bird species.

I'm deeply concerned that the review of native vegetation regulations in NSW will lead to a weakening of protection of native vegetation on private land.

Not so long ago clearing of native vegetation on private land in NSW was occurring at a rate that represented the worst land management practices anywhere in the world. The consequences of that were all too obvious, degraded waterways, salinity, erosion and the absolute decimation of flora and fauna throughout the State. Things have improved in recent years, largely thanks to the Native Vegetation Act 2003.

Healthy natural landscapes outside of the National Park Estate are essential for the viability of native flora and fauna. Many farmers value native vegetation on their properties and are happy to play a vital role in maintaining a sustainable environment. The participation of property owners in the Capertee Valley is testimony to that. However, prior to effective legislation it was quite apparent that many farmers had no interest whatsoever in sustainable land management and healthy bio diversity. The efforts of farmers that have worked hard to create a healthy bio diverse environment are very easily undermined by farmers and agri businesses that are interested in nothing more than short term profits. Whilst a healthy bio diverse environment is conducive to healthy and profitable farming it is not always appreciated or understood by many landowners.

Many of the proposed changes will lead to a significant increase in uncontrolled and unsustainable land clearing. In particular the proposal to allow clearing of invasive native species, the thinning of native vegetation and uncontrolled ecological burning without the approval of a catchment management authority will inevitably result in the

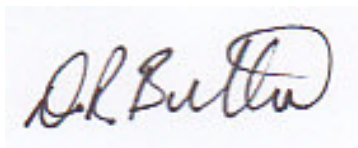
loss of large areas of native vegetation. This will result in even less critical habitat for many threatened and declining woodland bird species that already exist on the brink of extinction due to past land clearing practices.

Finally, I'm particularly concerned by the intention of the Shooters and Fishers Party to introduce legislation to parliament to repeal the Native Vegetation Act 2003. Unfortunately the NSW Coalition Government has already demonstrated it's willingness to do deals with those extremist thugs by agreeing to allow shooters into National Parks.

Any weakening of land clearing laws will have dire consequences for the NSW landscape and the species that need whatever is left of severely depleted native vegetation on farmland.

I urge you to resist any demands to weaken native vegetation protection legislation in NSW.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D. Butler', written in a cursive style.

David Butler