

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

Friday 24 August 2012

By email: native.vegetation@environment.nsw.gov.au

Submission to the draft Native Vegetation Regulation 2012

Mudgee District Environment Group (MDEG), based in the Mid-Western Region local government area in NSW, is working for the conservation of our natural heritage and a sustainable future for our children.

MDEG objects strongly to the proposed changes to the *Native Vegetation Regulation 2012*. These changes will cause a significant increase in legalised clearing activities across NSW. This will have a serious impact on threatened species survival and will prevent the NSW Government from achieving the environmental goals and targets in the State Plan, NSW 2021.

Goal 22 – ‘*Protect Our Natural Environment*’ has a target to ‘*Protect and Restore Priority Land, Vegetation and Water Habitats*’.

Under this target are specific aims to:

‘Protect and conserve land, biodiversity and native vegetation

- Identify and seek to acquire land of high conservation and strategic conservation value, for permanent conservation measures
- Establish voluntary arrangements with landowners over the next decade to bring
 - an average 20,000 hectares per year of private land under conservation management
 - an average 300,000 hectares per year of private land being improved for sustainable management¹

¹ NSW 2021: A Plan to Make NSW Number One p43

The proposal to create three new categories of Routine Agricultural Management Activities (RAMAs) for clearing of Invasive Native Species, clearing for the purpose of 'environmental works' and for thinning native vegetation will cause a significant increase in clearing activities across the state.

This increase of non reportable clearing activity will make it difficult for Catchment Management Authorities and Government regulators to identify illegal clearing activities.

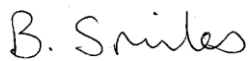
The proposal to allow clearing impacts to occur in areas of endangered ecological communities through the removal of small patches of native vegetation, thinning and other activities exempt under the legislation as RAMAs is not acceptable.

The loss of native vegetation is a key threatening process for many flora and fauna species in NSW.

The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage is abrogating its responsibility to protect the environment of NSW by proposing to increase vegetation clearing across the state.

The proposed changes to the *Native Vegetation Regulation 2012* will result in the return of broad scale clearing in NSW and should not be adopted.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "B. Smiles".

Bev Smiles
Chairperson