
From: Fiona Lumsden [mailto:]
Sent: Wednesday, 22 August 2012 7:23 PM
To: EHPP Landscapes & Ecosystems Section Mailbox
Subject: Take action today to protect our native landscapes and wildlife

Dear Sir/Madam

My partner and I regularly survey bird population trends on the western slopes of NSW with Birdlife Australia. We see for ourselves first hand how much forest and woodland has been cleared or seriously degraded and what impacts that is having on wildlife ecosystems. I have bird watched and painted birds for over 30 years. I have seen so many once common species decline severely. The trend to extinction is speeding up alarmingly worldwide. We are a well-off country. What excuse do we have to plunder our natural wealth with no thought for the future? We can't afford to lose or degrade any more habitat - they are such tiny islands already. Please don't repeal the Native Vegetation Act. So many of us don't have a feel for the bigger picture and how it all adds up. Some things can't be undone.

Our state's native vegetation provides essential environmental, social and economic benefits, including protecting water quality, maintaining soil health and providing wildlife habitat for threatened species.

I am strongly opposed to the government's proposal to allow clearing, thinning and burning of large areas of native vegetation without assessment and approval by a Catchment Management Authority. These activities will have a serious impact on the environment, and should not be classified as 'routine agricultural management activities'.

The changes proposed in the draft *Native Vegetation Regulation* will place large areas of native vegetation at risk. The proposal to allow clearing of invasive native species and thinning of native vegetation without advice and approval from a CMA has the potential to result in the loss of hundreds of thousands of hectares of native vegetation. I am also opposed to proposals to weaken offset rules and facilitate clearing of paddock trees and small patches in cultivation.

I am deeply alarmed by news that the Shooters and Fishers Party intend to introduce legislation to repeal the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*. We cannot afford to return to the era of broadscale land clearing, when millions of hectares of forests and woodlands were destroyed. The government must uphold strong native vegetation laws so that we don't return to the unsustainable practices of the past.

We need stronger laws to protect for our wildlife and native vegetation, not weaker ones. I urge you to maintain the environmental protections in our native vegetation regulations, and to vigorously oppose any move to repeal the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*.

Fiona Lumsden

