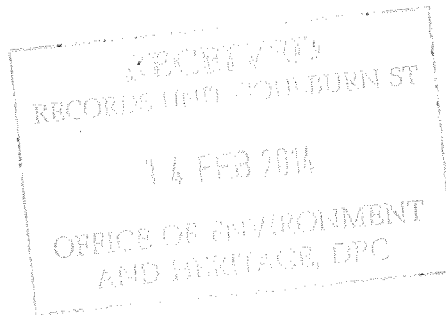




# Natural Resources Commission

13 February 2014

Mr Terry Bailey  
Acting Chief Executive  
Office of Environment and Heritage  
PO Box A290  
Sydney South NSW 1232



  
Dear Mr Bailey

## **Saving our Species Program**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments to the Priority Action Statement (PAS) and the newly developed Saving our Species (SoS) program.

The Natural Resources Commission (NRC) has previously offered its support for the proposed direction outlined in PASII. The NRC commends the new SoS program which continues the same approach but incorporates findings from the statutory review of the PASII program.

In particular, the NRC strongly supports using repeatable, transparent and auditable processes to determine investment and management priorities. The NRC also commends strategic approaches based on outcomes, efforts to align conservation effort and the flexibility to allow project activities to be adapted as knowledge improves.

The NRC appreciates threatened species management is challenging given limited resources available. While the greatest proportion of any budget should be allocated to site specific conservation projects, the NRC's previous audits found that on-going investment in engagement with community and industry can leverage significant financial returns on public funding. However, engagement processes need time, commitment and in many cases, an active approach to target particular groups and audiences to achieve the best possible outcomes. Business targets for leverage ratios may be useful to focus investment in this area and track performance such as return-on-investment over time.

Like other environmental management issues, threatened species management is diffuse and occurs within dynamic landscapes. Outcomes will require change to a great number of smaller decisions and actions across a wide range of unique circumstances predominately across privately managed land. As such, the NRC believes any future reform in threatened species policy and regulation should aim to complement, and promote voluntary landscape stewardship.

The suggestion that 'almost all threatened species can be saved' is commendable and an aspiration I sincerely hope can be achieved. However, I believe community expectations around this issue may need to be carefully managed especially with significant and on-going challenges such as limited resources and predicated step changes in future climate

Yours sincerely

  
Dr John Keniry AM  
Commissioner