

Thank you for the opportunity to comment of the review of NSW biodiversity legislation. I have been involved with implementing various pieces of environmental legislation in NSW since 1980.

I would like to suggest a rethink to the way the landscape is viewed and regulated for biodiversity conservation.

My comments below summarise a rough concept I have for a new approach.

I have purposely not developed this concept into fine detail, because I believe that would be the role of a group of appropriately qualified stakeholders.

If they even think this concept has merit, they may have a different perspective that would cause fine details to become redundant at an early stage.

In support of my suggestion, I would like to volunteer to further contribute to the process by developing this idea in unison with your nominees, if desired.

Good luck with the review, and here's hoping you can achieve a meaningful renaissance.

Stephen Gowlland

BIODIVERSITY LEGISLATION REVIEW

Biodiversity conservation needs a complete rethink!

It is inappropriate to approve activities on an ad-hoc basis that try to comply with a set of rules. Fauna and flora conservation needs to be linked to land management activities.

Giving land a value by permitting it to be used for production, will encourage conservation of that land in that condition.

If an area of land is classified as being suitable for grazing, the owner should be able to maintain that land for that purpose.

All forested areas should be either approved for forestry or conservation (or at least land management activities that do not permit the destruction of native vegetation that is inconsistent with that land management activity).

Ideas:

1. Single licensing system for land management options
 - to be approved by a single agency
2. License identifies land spatially on a map, that could be available publically
 - delineated spatially (not all land areas need to be licensed, but a land owner could have a single license for various different land uses across his entire property)
3. Land management categories could include:
 - forestry - also allows grazing
 - plantations
 - cropping (dryland) - also allows grazing
 - cropping (irrigated) - also allows grazing
 - cropping in Western Division - could permit the management of woody plant regrowth

- grazing - may include control of native animals (kangaroos) if greater than a pre-determined threshold
 - conservation - includes:
 - i. conservation agreements
 - ii. wildlife refuges
 - iii. property agreements
 - iv. other nominated areas for retention and offsets (from previous Acts)
4. All land management categories protect threatened species, habitats, TECs
 5. Land management is not to be inconsistent with LEP Zoning. If in conflict, Council gets to comment prior to license being approved.
 6. Biodiversity Act overrides LEP.
 7. Weeds are allowed (required) to be managed on selected (all?) license categories

This approach needs a working party of agency representatives to develop it into a workable system that achieves the aims and objectives of the various current biodiversity instruments.