

From: [REDACTED]
To: [POLICY Conservation & Development Policy Branch Mailbox](#)
Subject: TRIM: A Shared Responsibility
Date: Thursday, 4 September 2014 11:43:49 AM

Dear Biodiversity Review Panel,

I recently read the Bill proposed by the Shooters and Fishers Party regarding protection of native vegetation on private land.

Clause after clause made it easier for broad acre land clearing and reduction in the penalties for non compliance. It made me weep to think that NSW has come to this.

The UN decade on biodiversity, which began in 2011, recognises the global challenge posed by the dramatic decline in species. Australia has an abyssal record of species loss and extinction.

The gap between what we need to do to protect environmental support systems and what we are doing is widening. Unless we redefine that the principle threat to our future comes less from the relationships of nation to nation and more from the deteriorating relationship between ourselves and natural systems (soils, vegetation and wildlife) on which we ultimately depend the human prospect is a bleak one.

I believe the majority of farmers and graziers care deeply for the land and that should be the starting point for this review not short term commercial gains. We have learnt enough about soil acidification and soil loss in adverse weather conditions to know that broad acre clearing is detrimental not only to individual properties but to whole catchment systems.

The Australian wildlife is unique and it is our obligation to future generations to protect and conserve as much as possible by proving corridors and islands of native vegetation to ensure their survival. National Parks and Nature Reserves are not enough.

Urban dwellers have an enormous amount of restrictions as to what they can do on their land. It is a shared responsibility in a civil society and activity on rural land is no different.

So in the words provided by the Nature Conservation Council I agree with the following:

Existing biodiversity and conservation laws, including the Native Vegetation Act 2003 and Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995, must be maintained and strengthened. This includes a clear commitment to end broad-scale land clearing across NSW, and a commitment to 'no net loss' of native vegetation.

The existing framework of conservation legislation has slowed biodiversity loss, but it is not enough to stop species' decline.

Objective decision making must lead to improved environmental outcomes

The principle of "improving or maintaining" environmental outcomes should retained, and extended so that it applies to all development activities.

Decisions must be based on objective science-based decision making criteria (e.g. Environment Outcomes Assessment Methodology under the NV Act), and discretionary decision making should be very limited.

Biodiversity offsetting must be done well

The purpose of offsetting is to ensure than any development that affects biodiversity leads to an overall improvement for wildlife and species. It is important that rules around biodiversity offsetting reflect this key principle.

Where development is approved that significantly impacts native flora or fauna, the 'like for like' offsetting principle is fundamental and must not be weakened.

Retain the Independent Scientific Committee

The role of the Independent Scientific Committee under the Threatened Species Conservation Act, to decide which species are threatened and deserve special protection, should be retained. Listing of threatened species must continue to be based on the professional advice of the Scientific Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Carolyn Pettigrew