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Theme 1: Objects and principles for biodiversity conservation

Check box to view and respond to questions

Should there be an aspirational goal for biodiversity conservation?

A qualified YES. If aspirational means a rigid ideological commitment to trying to keep the environment as close as possible to its pre-European settlement state then my reply is NO- change is both necessary and inevitable if for no other reason than climate change demands it. The goal should be to aim at a sensible balance between the need for food production and the need for preservation based on evidential science, not emotionally based ideologies. Trying to fix the landscape in aspic as it existed circa 1800 is nonsensical.

Given available evidence about the value and state of the environment, are the existing legislative objects still valid? Do the current objects align with international and national frameworks, agreements, laws, obligations? If not, what objects are required?

A pragmatic(empirical) approach that recognises that change is both necessary -and desirable.

To what extent are the current objects being met?

The current situation is draconian and inflexible as far as land users are concerned. A case in point is Palerang Council's attempt to rezone over 50 per cent of the Shire's Ru1 farmland as Ru2 or E4. based on crude aerial photography caused such a backlash in the shire that it spawned the establishment of a grazier's group that successfully reversed this Green led proposal. The battle is chronicled in The Braidwood Times throughout 2014.

Could the objects of the current laws be simplified and integrated? If so, how?

Yes. The goal of the programme should be to find the optimal balance between land/ farming use and environmental protection- a balance that will change over time as circumstances change. At the moment the model is a combative one based mainly on ideologies, not a co-operative one based on science. The existing good guy/bad guy approach is unproductive.

Theme 2: Conservation action

Check box to view and respond to questions

Is the current system effective in encouraging landowners to generate public benefits from their land and rewarding them as environmental stewards? Or are current

mechanisms too focused on requiring private landowners to protect ecosystem services and biodiversity at their own cost?

As a farmer who is lucky to net a positive income in any year it is a negative to receive token support for fencing off areas for trees/riparian plantings etc. -and then be pressured to assign land in perpetuity. Even more irritating is to see government advisors driving around inspecting etc. without ever doing any hands-on work beyond requesting the need for the farmer to do more paper work. The whole protection programme is more about spin and tokenism than concrete on ground work that will have a lasting, positive impact on the environment.

Are there elements of the current system for private land conservation that raise impediments (for example, binding nature of agreements and potential loss of production) for individuals who want to manage their land for conservation? If so what are they? What incentives might be effective, efficient and equitable in promoting biodiversity conservation on private land?

Attitude. Government depts. treat farmers with suspicion(often as the bad guys)-and position themselves as the good guys with the "right" and superior agendas. Farming as a business is of little interest to them. In reality, their approach is one sided. This, naturally, doesn't make for productive, long term relationships.

What should be the role of organisations and bodies, such as the Nature Conservation Trust, in facilitating and managing private land conservation through mechanisms such as conservation and biobanking agreements?

No comment?

How should the government determine priorities for its investment in biodiversity conservation while enabling and encouraging others (e.g. community groups) to contribute to their own biodiversity conservation priorities?

By making it clear that government is interested in promoting farm viability as well as environmental protection-and behaving as if it meant it. Positioning govt. as the policeman is a major reason why the existing system works so poorly.

How can the effectiveness of conservation programs be monitored and evaluated?

By looking at farm health in conjunction with environment health.

How should any tradeoffs be assessed?

By acknowledging that biodiversity/flora and landscape programmes have to be seen as having very real economic impacts on farm profitability and viability. If communities want certain standards they should be prepared to compensate farmers for any losses they (the farmers) incur as a result of the imposition of those standards.

To what extent is the system forward looking or dealing with legacy impacts?

Marginally, at best.

To what extent does current practice (rather than the legislation) determine outcomes?

No Answer

Theme 3: Conservation in land use planning

Check box to view and respond to questions

How effective are current arrangements at ensuring biodiversity values are identified early and properly considered in strategic planning systems? How can they be improved?

By using science, not emotively based ideological stances.

How effective are current arrangements for delivering strategic outcomes for biodiversity and enhancing ecosystem services? How can they be improved?

Average at best

How should the effectiveness of strategic planning approaches be monitored and evaluated?

No Answer

Theme 4: Conservation in development approval processes

Check box to view and respond to questions

To what extent has the current framework created inconsistent assessment processes, environmental standards, offset practices and duplicative rules? What can be done to harmonise processes?

Don't know(in any macro sense).

Can we have a single, integrated approach to the approval of all forms of development, including agricultural development, that is proportionate to the risks involved? If yes, should one methodology (or a harmonised methodology) be used to assess all impacts? Does a need remain for some differences in assessment approaches?

Simplicity-with flexibility- is the ideal.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the different biodiversity assessment methodologies? Are the rules transparent and consistent? Is the way data is used to underpin decisions transparent? Do the assessment methodologies appropriately accommodate social and economic values?

The best science-not politics-should be the arbiter.

Does the regulatory system adequately protect listed threatened species, populations and ecological communities? Is there utility in specifically protecting these entities through the regulatory system?

DK

Are there other models (international or Australian) that regulate activities impacting on biodiversity that may be relevant to NSW?

DK

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Bound to be.

To what extent has the current regulatory system resulted in lost development opportunities and/or prevented innovative land management practices?

Do

Some impacts cannot be offset. What are they? Are these appropriately addressed in approval systems? What is the relevance of social and economic benefits of projects in considering these impacts?

No comment

How can offsets be more strategically located?

No comment

Are there areas currently regulated that would be better left to self-regulatory codes of practice or accreditation schemes?

The ideal is to have good regulation-a minority of land users will not play the game unless forced to do so.

Theme 5: Wildlife management

Check box to view and respond to questions

Have the threats to biodiversity posed by: (a) people taking animals and plants from the wild, (b) feral animals and weeds, and (c) illegally imported species, been effectively managed?

DK

Has the NPW Act and the supporting policy framework led to a positive change in the welfare of native animals (captive and free-living)? What role if any should the government have in ensuring the welfare of individual native animals – particularly

where there are already stand-alone welfare laws such as the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979?

I'd say yes Native animals should be protected. The key question is again one of finding the right balance. When do native animals need culling-when they eat 10pc,20pc,30pc of feed for livestock? Blanket protection for all natives all of the time just doesn't make sense.

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See above

Are the provisions for marine mammals effective?

DK

Is the current framework for wildlife licensing, offences and defences, including those applying to threatened species, easily understood? Is the current licensing system too complex? How can it be improved and simplified to focus on conservation outcomes?

DK

Is there currently appropriate regulation for the sustainable use and trade of wildlife?

DK

Theme 6: Information provisions

Check box to view and respond to questions

What information should be generated about the different kinds of value (for example, monetary and intrinsic value) of biodiversity and other natural assets in NSW?

A comprehensive suite of science as is affordable- on both sides of the equation(ie(protection value and land use values).

What type, quality and frequency of data should be collected about biodiversity? Who should be responsible for such a system?

Independent specialist bodies

Is current data about biodiversity highly credible and readily accessible? If not, how can quality and access be improved?

DK

How effective is the threatened species listing process (including the listing of key threatening processes) in guiding subsequent conservation action?

Not in a position to comment

Should threatened species listing decisions be decoupled from decisions on conservation actions (including recovery planning) and regulatory processes?

Ditto as above

To what extent, if any, does having national and state lists of threatened species cause confusion, regulatory burden or duplication of conservation effort? How could national and state lists be rationalised?

DK

To what extent is the identification of critical habitat an effective tool for biodiversity conservation? Should we list critical habitat for more species where relevant and useful?

DK

Should private conservation data be collected and if so how?

Yes, if there is to be a complete picture of what is going on in an overall sense

Other comments

No Answer