Submission 2 – Anonymous

Anonymous User just submitted the survey 'Theme 1: Objects and principles for biodiversity conservation' with the responses below.

Should there be an aspirational goal for biodiversity conservation?

Yes

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?

Demonstrated continued decline in environmental quality means some part of the system is invalid - whether it is the objects, the actions or the resources to implement them I'm nto sure about, possibly all three.

To what extent are the current objects being met?

They are not wholly being met - Moree continued land clearing, ongoing biodiversity reductions and dissappearing species (eg Goonoo Malleefowl). Some trends might be positive, such as a slow down in illegal clearing.

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

Yes they could be simplfied, but I think only with clear quantitative, hard targets to accompany them

Anonymous User just submitted the survey 'Theme 2: Conservation action' with the responses below.

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?

I don't think current NSW stewardship arrangements are effective - they lack legal teeth and penetration in the community. I think they should be reversed - if an landholder wants to impact on biodiversity they pay the cost to repair the damage, like biobanking but for native vegetation.

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?

lack of flexibility in biobanking around grazing as part of the system (ie not 100% conservation, but 80%)

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?

Not sure, I don't see the NCT as viable in most of the State, only treechanger areas close ot the coast and Sydney. The experience with Stanley and Carwell in inland northern NSW lacks rigour and outcomes.

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?

1) Complete vegetation mapping instead of restarting it with new scientists as is currently occurring (eg dismissal of John Benson's hard work over many years) 2) use actual veg mapping instead of models that dont work (eg current veg mapping focus) 3) regional assessments of rarity, loss, significance and opportunity to improve 4) put this information into the public sphere so communities can draw their own conclusions about focus areas in their regions.

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

With resources. Too frequently these are not there, or are pulled part-way through.

How should any tradeoffs be assessed?

Determine a 'Nil net loss' of biodiversity, ecosystem function or processes.

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

The current system cannot deal with legacy impacts as it lacks rigour around cumulative impacts /death of a thousand cuts. It can only be forward looking unless you want to provide resources to purchase and convert land that has been incorrectly zoned, subdivided or developed.

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

It is a strong determinant - practice in impact assessment, in resourcing coimpliance (or lack thereof), in a significant lack of public information and understanding about legislation, in how developments are prioritised by understaffed NSW planning teams,

Anonymous User just submitted the survey 'Theme 3: Conservation in land use planning' with the responses below.

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

Mostly ineffective, except for site-based species or those with easily identified site-based reliance (eg nesting tree for an owl species). We need better information for decision-makers - proper thorough vegetation mapping (not modelling), better science on key threatening processes (how to beat them), better information on the value of vegetation, both ecosystem services and in dollar terms.

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

They are not effective. We continue to see ecosystem decline at a landscape level in most areas. They need to better integrate information and focus less on the site (only) impact, to deal with the death of a thousand cuts.

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

Ongoing landscape biodiversity health measures. Loss of species, weediness, hecatres cleared, hectares planted/conserved

Anonymous User just submitted the survey 'Theme 4: Conservation in development approval processes' with the responses below.

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?

Mining does not consider environmental effects properly due to exemptions under the Mining SEPP. Current rules do not stop non-woody vegetation being cleared and conversion from grazing to cropping. As such new rules should be development based - ie regulate cropping areas like in Western Zone NSW. There are too many areas still being lost to cropping.

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?

I'm no convinced this can occur, given the complexity of the situation and appropraite regulators - eg Councils do not currently regulate rural land use despite some legislative drivers.

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?

No Answer

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?

No. Death of a thousand cuts continues. They do need to be recognised, however they are still reliant upon habitat which continues to be lost.

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

We need to put a dollar value on biodiversity - I'd suggest replacement cost initially.

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

I'm sure there are lost development opportunities, however this would be for good reason.

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?

Highly temporal scale assets - Hollow-bearing trees, which are not protected at all in approvals systems except when there is a demonstrated thr spp within them. Impact to waterways. These are generally considered, but lack of effective riparian protection and mining ignoring these does compromise results.

How can offsets be more strategically located?

With better information - veg mapping (not modelling).

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

Exempt/Complying development in urban and industrial areas. Some fo the basic RAMAs under veg act - fenceling clearing, houses etc.

Anonymous User just submitted the survey 'Theme 5: Wildlife management' with the responses below.

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?

I think (a) and (c) are not big issues so they have perhaps been effectively managed. (b) is an ongoing problem that we are not effectively dealing with.

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 think so, yes. Native animals should continue to be protected, or people will exploit them (shooting for sport, harvesting for food, taking for pets eg parrots). We need to continue to regulate these things.

Are the provisions for marine mammals effective?

No Answer

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?

I think it is generally OK, not sure how it could be improved.

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

No Answer

Anonymous User just submitted the survey 'Theme 6: Information provisions' with the responses below.

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?

It shoudl be widely generated and used in considering impacts and cost:benefit analyses.

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

Landscape health measures (tree cover, riparian veg width, % exotic groundcover, % cropping), specific measures for thr spp. NSW govt shoudl be responsible for these - NSW OEH or similar.

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

I think it is fairly credible except veg modelling efforts which seem to be full of errors. None of it is particularly accessible, except through LEP maps. Need more statutory maps out there.

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

Seems OK, except it should be more proactive (ie seek species out for listing) rather than reactive (ie wait for nominations).

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

Yes, a species in decline and at risk should be listed regardless of the efforts required to fix it. Cons actions and regulatroy processes are fleeting, temporary things so are not a valid consideration for whether a spp/community/population is at high to medium risk of extinction.

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?

I think they are OK. Duplication is there, but that is for good reason.

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?

I'm not sure it has been properly implemented. We shoudl either ramp it up and do a proper, considered listing process, or get rid of this feature.

Should private conservation data be collected and if so how?

Yes, by regional NSW govt staff in collaboration with landholders.