

Office of Environment & Heritage
PO Box A290
Sydney South NSW 1232



5.09.2014

Dear Sir,

As landholders with a Private Land Conservation Agreement over 50% of our property, we would like to make a few comments in regard to the review of the various NSW legislation aimed at protecting our natural resources so that future generations might share in the services provided by these resources on which we rely, and at giving a framework for recognition that flora and fauna have an intrinsic right to exist, separate from human need.

It should be recognised that had all rural landholders been doing the right thing to protect biodiversity on their land and had development been undertaken using the principles of sustainable economic development, it is unlikely that there would have been a need for the Native Vegetation Act, which would in turn have resulted in fewer threatened/vulnerable ecological communities and species.

Landholders undertaking sustainable agriculture are well aware of the economic and amenity benefits of conserving remnant vegetation on their property - native pastures and direct seeding not only protect soil from erosion thus reducing the need for fertilisers, but also protect downstream water courses, leading to more resilient landscapes, which in turn is linked to a reduction in threats to biosecurity. Unfortunately there is still a long way to go before sustainable agriculture is mainstreamed.

In urban areas, more enlightened authorities have recognised the huge benefits of true sustainable economic development. However these initiatives are being eroded by recent changes to riparian and roadside corridor guidelines which identify a reduction of corridor widths, leading to a loss of biodiversity refuge, connectivity and water quality. As well, it is likely that the RFS 10/50 regulations will significantly impact on the biodiversity that many local authorities have successfully been working with property owners to maintain while reducing the risk of fire, while the real issues here, of climate change and land use planning, fail to be correctly identified and recognised.

Given the above examples, we recommend that any review of environmental legislation should be undertaken with a very clear view of the impacts being made by other State Authorities – namely Department of Planning and Environment, Office of Water, Roads and Maritime Services and RFS. The aim of this would be that any changes recommended by these Authorities should be overseen by a multi-faceted panel, that actually understands the environmental impacts any changes may have, and with an understanding that one size does not fit all. This would hopefully result in more cohesive outcomes, including the recognition that changes made to facilitate

development in Sydney, for example, can be totally detrimental in other areas of NSW – ie one size does not fit all.

Whilst streamlining of legislation may be beneficial, as landholders trying to protect and improve the natural resources of our region, we have seen at first hand the existing problem and impact of landholders ignoring environmental legislation currently in place. The fact that there are so few regulatory staff available to support Local Land Service staff, responsible for making the Native Vegetation Act actually work, is totally counter productive.

So whilst State Government may hope that any streamlining of legislation will lead to a reduction in costs, it should be understood that any such devolvment to the community needs to be undertaken with sufficient support and regulatory staff being readily available and therefore recognised, as the key resource they are, in that community. On a personal level we are very grateful for the advice and support we receive to better manage the natural resources and control feral pests on our property.

Further, we would like to add that for our environment to be protected, and our place in that environment (top of the food chain and therefore vulnerable) recognised, requires awareness of the issues together with political leadership. As part of your review we would recommend some capacity building in this regard for our elected representatives.

We wish you well with the review, but sincerely hope that it does not lead to a “watering down” of these key pieces of legislation, and instead results in a greater community awareness of the need for this legislation.

Yours sincerely,



Diana Kureen

Kevin Diletti and Diana Kureen