

SUBMISSION ON BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

- Existing biodiversity and conservation legislation, including the provisions of the Native Vegetation Act 2003 and Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995, must be maintained and strengthened.
- In view of the major biodiversity losses since European settlement and ongoing removal and economic impacts, there must be an overarching object to protect and conserve biodiversity.
- The principles of ecologically sustainable development, that underpin existing legislation, must be maintained.
- There must be a clear legislative commitment to maintain or improve environmental outcomes as the key test of clearing proposals.
- There must be a clear legislative commitment to end broad-scale land clearing across NSW. The NSW government should commit to 'no net loss' of native vegetation reflecting its diversity and value.
- The application of important land clearing laws should be extended so that all development (including extractive industry, forestry, urban development and agriculture) subscribes to the same policy of "improving or maintaining" environmental outcomes.
- 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.
- Where development is approved that significantly impacts native flora or fauna, the 'like for like' offsetting principle is fundamental and must not be weakened.
- The role of the Independent Scientific Committee under the TSC Act should be retained and listing must continue to be based on the professional advice of the Scientific Committee.
- Routine Agricultural Management Activities (RAMAs) should be restricted to genuinely low impact activities.
- Cumulative impact must be a key consideration in assessing clearing and development proposals.
- More than enough land has been cleared to produce food and fibre and on which to improve the productivity of farming.
- The government should ensure the legislation is enforced and use extensive education resources to communicate its importance and provisions.

