

**Dear Honorable Members of the Review Panel,**

### **Introduction**

Briefly I, have been concerned for the conservation of the biodiversity of flora and fauna in New South Wales, not least Australia-wide and Internationally, for some 10 years now. I have travelled the globe, as a tourist and bushwalked a lot of natural parks around the world, especially the Blue Mountains NP. I am currently a member of a bushwalking club in that area, and feel if our scarce natural parks, wilderness areas and farmland against land clearing and malpractice clearing ideology then I have a real fear for human progress.

Most renowned religions, around the world talk about people remaining in balance with nature. It is this balanced approach I strongly agree with! So that if a tree has to be felled then it needs to be replenished with like for like or better. As I would like humanity to leave the planet in better shape than it started. Therefore I believe the following key issues need to be addressed (given by your current legislation) as I see them.

### **KEY ISSUES FOR YOUR 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.

Answer:- Yes this issue needs to be maintained and strengthened. But more importantly put the funding and energy into educating better farming and mining practices. But also improve conservation methods. That is by utilising cleaner and more ecologically friendly practices. It has been clearly shown that increases in land degradation coupled with global events like climate change can result in the destruction of biodiversity. I think conservation is the right word to use. Protection through better management. This sometimes means to adapt to your surroundings. Including methods and practices of preserving old ideas with new. An Example of this can be seen in some natural parks (South Island of New Zealand and the UK) where some control of livestock is introduced to battle overgrowing grass and weed growth on fringes of natural parks. Where practical this could be another way of controlling fire hazards in some low density urban or farmlands nearby.

- 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.

Answer:- Yes to this issue. I feel the best way to protect conservation of biodiversity is to inform and educate the general public. Also to utilise organisations such as the National Parks Association to engage with non government bodies such as the Wilderness Society and other creditable organisations, in a united, unambiguous effort and to the public of its legal rights and moral duties for the benefit of future generations.

- The principles of ecologically sustainable development, that underpin existing legislation, must be maintained.

Answer:- Yes again. Principles must not only be maintained but improved upon. For instance, truly informative website designed for easy general access be made available to the public. But we must also set aside sufficient funding for relevant organisations such as NPA to encourage public

support on sustainability and participation. Like giving regular seminars or eco tours and community groups around tourist spots in return for small donations and voluntary work while monitoring Park Ranger feedback.

- There must be a clear legislative commitment to maintain or improve environmental outcomes as the key test of clearing proposals.

Answer:- I feel this key issue (clearing proposal) is confusing. True, legislation needs to be in plain English, precise, to the point and unambiguous in regard to its aims. It should be made visible to the public and corporate bodies in general.

- 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.

Answer:- Yes to this issue. The "no net loss" concept is a good one whereby corporations and the like need to provide and maintain alternative pockets of land to those they have commercially developed as an offset. But due diligence is required in monitoring the upkeep as some unscrupulous managers may neglect the commissioning and maintenance of such offset land. i.e. Out of site out of mind. Also we should consider factoring in alternative land use that is beneficial to both community and industry alike. For example rather than clear excess land for more monoculture farming. Perhaps we should introduce pockets of native land for tourism like rights of way in the UK for naturalists to pay small donations to farms in exchange for crossing into private land. Again a win win situation. For mining areas they could get locals to help them regenerate moonscape areas for community engagement and learning from past mistakes. All this is a good healing practice as well so that past mistakes do not reoccur.

- 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.

Answer:- Yes to this issue!

- 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.

Answer:- I agree with this issue emphatically. However science is not be a "be all and end all" with everybody. Therefore a holistic approach encompassing transparent community consultation is the key to success.

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

Answer:- Again I agree. However I am open to looking at advances in genetic modification of native species to preserve and protect them from introduced pests and diseases, using biological control.

- 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.

Answer:- Yes again! But include a cross section of community in the consultation for proper public representation. An example is the human or urban development in Blue Mountains NP where councils, park rangers, developers and other relevant delegates should represent the community as a whole encompassing a more rounded and transparent approach to decision making.

- Routine Agricultural Management Activities (RAMAs) should be restricted to genuinely low impact activities.

Answer:- Yes to this! Again I also believe in showing fairness to all by letting any of these activities be presented as a showcase model. By using a management strategy that has minimal impact on the surrounding flora and fauna is paramount. This would give rise to innovation and work satisfaction, so an argument can be raised to prove feasibility. Otherwise the proposal should be rejected.

- Cumulative impact must be a key consideration in assessing clearing and development proposals.

Answer:- Yes again! Also getting signed approvals by different organisations such as NPA, rural fire brigade and general community representatives to voice their objections prior to development approval.

- More than enough land has been cleared to produce food and fibre and on which to improve the productivity of farming.

Answer:- My only argument is whilst population increases more demand for food and fibre land will be issued. If an individual's land care efforts are less than legislated they should be prosecuted and encouraged to improve or sell up to someone more diligent. This may be a brave but necessary move for any government.

- The government should ensure the legislation is enforced and use extensive education resources to communicate its importance and provisions.

Answer:- Policing any unlawful land clearing is difficult at best over large tracks of land. However with modern advances in better technology such as with satellite imagery coupled with affordable mobile drones surveying and recognisance capturing imagery as records for proof of evidence becoming less of a fiction and more of a reality.