



Biodiversity Review Panel

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Protection of the integrity and biodiversity of native flora and fauna is a fundamental objective of the Mosman Parks & Bushland Association.

The Association's purpose over its 50 year life has been the protection of parks, bushland and open space in Mosman. Members of the Association, including the Bradley sisters, Eileen and Joan, developed a system of bush regeneration that is still in use today. One of the earliest concerns was the diminishing numbers of blue wrens.

The Association is concerned that any attempt to streamline legislation affecting biodiversity should in no way diminish or dilute the current legislation. Rather, the existing laws under review - the Native Vegetation Act 2003, the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995, the Nature Conservation Trust Act 2001 and the National Parks & Wildlife Act 1974 - should be strengthened if the continuing decline in biodiversity in NSW is to be halted and reversed.

Biodiversity legislation and management should be integrated in other frameworks. The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 should be strengthened to give real biodiversity protection in planning. Others are fisheries, forestry, weed control and bushfire regulation. This Association has been appalled at the introduction of the **10/50 vegetation clearance legislation resulting from amendments made to the Rural Fires Act.** The legislation has been applied indiscriminately, without concern for biodiversity including threatened species, and without adequate consultation. The effect has been immediate and disastrous.

In response to issues raised in the paper:

Theme 1 - Objects and principles for biodiversity conservation

- The aspirational Goal should be to protect all native species and populations in NSW, reversing their decline, not merely maintaining them at current levels.

Theme 2 - Conservation Action

- Conservation action should be legislated and enforceable

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- The Native Vegetation Act and the Threatened Species Conservation Act are critical in halting biodiversity decline. The protections provided by these Acts should be strengthened.
- Vegetation clearing, both rural and urban, is a threat to biodiversity.
- Threatened species recovery programs should continue to be mandatory. Setting priorities and allowing flexibility should be part of a mandatory program not a replacement.

Theme 3 - Conservation in Land Use Planning

- The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 should be strengthened to give real protection and enhancement of biodiversity.
- All strategic planning should be based on the principle of Ecologically Sustainable Development.
- Strategic broad scale planning which takes into account the cumulative impacts of development can provide for connective biodiversity corridors.
- Local Environment Plans should be compelled by legislation to protect and conserve threatened species and endangered ecological communities.
- The biodiversity legislation should ensure that provisions of the EPA Act to protect threatened species and endangered communities are enforced.
- There should be no net loss of native vegetation from urban, industrial or mining development.
- Protection of native species should be paramount.

Theme 4 - Conservation in Development Approval processes

- Biodiversity has a future benefit and should not be traded for social and economic benefits.
- Consent authorities must be required to refuse consent where environmental assessment has shown that there will be an unacceptable impact on threatened species, endangered ecological communities or their habitats.
- Biodiversity offsets should be considered for development that is essential only and they should be used only as a last resort when all alternatives have been thoroughly investigated. Offsets should be on a like for like basis, not indirect; they should improve biodiversity; they should be maintained in perpetuity and enforced.

Theme 5 - Wildlife management

- Loss of habitat is the most serious threat to biodiversity. However feral animals and weeds pose another key threat. Assessment of threats and decisions about management should be objective,

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- scientific and well funded. The Biosecurity Framework and the Biosecurity Act are relevant to the review and should be supported by biodiversity legislation.
- Protected areas should be managed for conservation. Commercial activities that compromise ecological values are inconsistent with biodiversity improvement. Protected areas should not be logged; recreational shooting should not be permitted.
- Increased and better managed reserved land should protect critical habitats for listed threatened species.

Theme 6 - Information provisions

- The value of biodiversity is intrinsic, not monetary.
- The provision of information should be well resourced, systematic and transparent. Independent, professionally accredited assessors and consultants provide greater transparency.
- Programs that have not been effective should not be abandoned unless the reason is scientific. They should continue to operate while alternatives are examined, or supplementary programs are introduced.

Thank you for the invitation to comment on the issues paper.



Kate Eccles

President

5th September, 2014