

srlup - Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL)

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Date: 11/8/2013 10:14 PM
Subject: Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL)

Dear Director Assessment Policy,

I find it very disappointing that there is so little time provided for a response to the proposed Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL) mapping of our region, the Dorrigo Plateau, and that there seems to have been very little effort made to advise the community of this planned change.

The map provided to the community provides insufficient detail for property owners, in the general area of the so called fertile zone, to easily determine whether their property is wholly or partially included in the BSAL zone or in fact is outside it as there are no cadastral boundaries shown. The feeling the community have is that the intent with everything about this process is to make it as difficult as possible for anything to stop mining, irrespective of how valuable land is for farming today and perhaps for hundreds of years to come. It seems in the very least property boundaries could have been shown so a clear indicator existed between fertile properties and insufficiently fertile properties.

One has the feeling that this new rushed policy is inconsistent when compared to other land and water use policies where there are clearer and fairer policies designed to protect (not destroy) forestry land, native vegetation and fisheries waterways whilst at the same time supporting those industries. NSW appears not to care about its scarce fertile farm land and food security. This rush to risk good land in order to produce more almighty dollars by mining is a sickening conclusion for those that love our land. This BSAL policy seems to protect nothing other than mining companies. To make matters worse anyone wanting to fight to try to save their property needs to outlay considerable sums of money with no guarantee that it will produce any benefit for them at all. Shame on the Government for behaving in this way.

Agricultural land should all be zoned in defined protection categories, this scheme seems to provide no guarantees to anyone irrespective of whether your property is located in a map green zone or not - all farming land is completely at risk of destruction by mining. A depressing position for land owners to find themselves in. People refer to this spineless policy as the 'Open Gateway Policy' and from the little I know of it that description seems to fit very well.

The NSW zoning system proposed in the map provided takes no consideration of the ecosystem services delivered from farms and their prime responsibility to contribute to food security both here in NSW and nationally and increasingly internationally. The production of food becomes more and more important as the human population increases at an exponential rate on this planet. Only the ignorant ignore this. Being a wealthy state and country has its attractions if one stops thinking about the needs of future generations. But if it has to be food or wealth, as it might come down to soon, there is no contest. We are getting closer to a time when wealth loses importance compared to our never ending need for more food and clean water to feed greater and greater earth populations.

It is sad to think back to the promises this Government made in opposition of introducing a system in Government that would protect farm land - such a hope is now but a distant memory. As an owner of a small property on the Dorrigo Plateau I feel this proposed LNP policy totally fails the man on the land - if the Dorrigo Plateau is not worth protecting then one has to conclude this Government places no importance on farming or the natural environment in this State.

The man on the land takes pride in food production and in caring for our native environment and increasingly in taking actions to ensure our river water remains clean and unpolluted. Then, notwithstanding their gallant efforts they are confronted with a Government that promised positive action to protect good farming land and produces such a tooth-less tiger of a policy. A proposed policy that appears aimed at risking good farming land in NSW so that mining companies have the freedom to rape and destroy something that was once highly valued by our forebears.

A very sad state of affairs for our treasured land.

Yours sincerely, Trevor Deane