



# VALLEY WATCH Inc

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5 June 2014

The Director  
Planning Coordination and Support  
Department of Planning and Environment  
GPO Box 39  
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Review of Environment Protection Zones**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Review of Environment Protection Zones.

Valley Watch is an environmental group, which has been in existence for over 20 years and has a membership in excess of 100 persons. Located in lower reaches of the Clarence Valley of Northern NSW our members give strong community support for protecting our natural environment.

Whilst acknowledging that this review is outside our LEP area the connection of wildlife corridors and protection of species in our neighbouring shires is of paramount concern to our group.

We are pleased to note the Review supports the use of environmental zones and overlays in the Far North Coast Local Environmental Plans.

However we are extremely alarmed to note the review also recommends the downgrading for the zoning of rainforest, old growth forest, wetlands and mangroves from E2 to E3, and to downgrade core Koala habitat and endangered ecological communities on town edges from E4 to residential.

These areas are all of exceptional conservation value and deserve the highest protection.

Degrading these important areas can only have negative cumulative impacts on our wildlife and the protection of intergenerational equity.

It is paramount that there is a robust assessment of environmental values, and identification and protection of areas of high conservation value, including endangered ecological communities, critical habitat and wildlife corridors.

Communities may be ill-equipped to plan and protect their local natural environments if important environment protection zones are removed.

We believe the strategic planning principles in this review should establish clear outcomes based on objectives for achieving improved environmental protection and social outcomes that value the integrity of our natural environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Regards

Ros Woodward  
President  
Valley Watch Inc