

Submission to State Environmental Planning Policy Review 2015

I object to the proposal to repeal the North Coast Regional Environmental Plan (NCREP).

North coast councils (Lismore, Ballina, Tweed, Kyogle & Byron) continue to be prevented from introducing environmental protection zones to their new LEPs. The hollow announcement of returning planning to the community becomes more hypocritical with every state government planning decision, and the community has no faith that the government will provide anything but lip-service to environmental matters.

The current proposal to repeal the NCREP is a cynical strike at the heart of sustainability and environmental protection on the North Coast. It will remove the current requirement for consideration of a range of highly significant biodiversity and cultural heritage values of the area when making LEPs. North Coast Councils have made these considerations when formulating their long-awaited LEPs, only to have the state defer newly-proposed environmental zones and refuse to act on recommendations of the review into their use.

The repeal of the NCREP changes the very basis of how LEPs are formulated on the North Coast and will result in an inadequate and blinkered approach to environmental and heritage protection. Changing the basis of LEP formulation while these key environmental outcomes remain in the balance is a recipe for continued chaos in what should be an orderly process of sound strategic planning and development control conditions.

Councils have been left with multiple LEPs operating concurrently, environmental zones defaulting to maps several decades out of date, and now a new ball game where holistic land use planning on a landscape scale will be virtually impossible to achieve.

North coast councils, as directed by government, have prepared their new LEPs according to a range of planning strategies including a quite prescriptive NCREP.

The issues it identifies for land requiring environmental protection zoning in plan-making are as relevant today as they were when it was first introduced. It is an important legal justification for changes currently proposed to north coast LEPs, requiring consideration of matters which promote sustainable ecosystems, conservation of biodiversity and heritage values in a prescriptive manner that will be lost if the NCREP is repealed.

I urge the government to reconsider the repeal of the North Coast Regional Environmental Plan. It should be retained. The REP must remain in force AT LEAST until the new environmental protection zones proposed for the deferred areas are introduced.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Murray

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