

Review of the Native Vegetation Clearing Regulations

We make the following brief comments in relation to the review.

We have lived in the Goulburn Valley all our lives and consider native vegetation to be under more serious threats currently than it has been for decades.

We have concerns that the Goulburn Valley is mostly included in mapping as a 'low risk' region which is clearly not the case and leads us into question the accuracy mapping across the State.

Mature trees along roadsides and on private land are a biological keystone in the ecosystem and are not recognised sufficiently in mapping of our region.

The incremental loss of these trees has been ongoing with exemptions or loopholes whereby landowners ringbark trees, permit stock damage and destroy during planned burn offs, however losses have significantly increased with Federal Water Efficiency programs.

We also have real concerns with current off set programs. In our region there is a total lack of transparency, it is not possible to track these "offsets" which we understand in most cases to be no more than "suppliers" undertaking no more than agreeing not to remove native vegetation that in our region should never be considered for clearing. This "offset" option is encouraging and increasing the loss of native vegetation in our region. Any consideration of the use of Public land for these off sets is outrageous.

We believe there needs to be an independent body responsible for auditing the implementation of offsets relating to removal of native vegetation as we are currently seeing significant well established off set plantings in the City of Greater Shepparton at real risk of removal in planning applications.

We are seeing less and less evidence of minimisation of native vegetation losses in planning applications across the board, which is a serious flaw in the current regulations.

We wish you well in your deliberations and hope for significant strengthening of regulations that protect our local landscape.

Yours, [REDACTED]

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