

Review of the Native Vegetation Clearing Regulations
Regulatory Strategy and Design
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

Thank you for allowing our Group to make this submission. The Group wishes to make a submission in respect to public land and land adjoining public land, including Port Campbell National Park, Bay of Islands National Park, and Great Otway National Park, parks and road reserves.

It is more than 'sensible' to protect sensitive native vegetation to ensure protection of Victoria's biodiversity which is currently under extreme threat from:

- higher population pressures including expansion and development of urban areas which impact on public land and national parks
- destruction of wildlife corridors
- eucalypt and other species dieback
- weed infestations choking native vegetation
- recreational and tourism pressures, including development of national parks for tourism
- feral animals
- the effects of climate change.

It is a critical necessity to protect native vegetation and biodiversity from these common threats on the SW coast which are causing irreparable damage. More resources are required to stop the decline in habitat, and it is also critical to increase the area allocated to conservation on this coast.

The proposed new changes to native vegetation seem to significantly weaken the current legislation, which is inappropriate considering the extra pressures that native vegetation and biodiversity now face, for example:

Current: Planning should protect sites and features of nature conservation, biodiversity, geological or landscape value.

Proposed: Planning should protect sites for nature conservation and biodiversity, and geological or landscape features of value.

The current legislation proposed 'features of nature conservation...', while the proposed suggests 'for nature conservation...'. The former therefore refers to areas that are already nature conservation areas, the latter appears to suggest not current sites, but ones that may be proposed.

Also the word 'should' must be replaced by the word 'must'. There must be designated areas where nature conservation must be conserved.

Our Group's work in revegetation and research on endangered species demonstrates that healthy colonies of Southern Brown Bandicoot can be destroyed by clearing even small areas of native vegetation in their breeding grounds.

The government has a duty of care to ensure better protection of Victoria's native vegetation and biodiversity for intergenerational equity and needs stronger legislation to prevent impacts.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

Secretary

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