

ONLINE SUBMISSION DETAILS

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Organisation	Individual
Postcode	
How do you think we should improve the FFG Act?	<p>The key focus should be to place a high value on what little flora and fauna we have left. The only way to do this is to impose large penalties on those who remove native vegetation or destroy native animals or their habitat. In my area I see almost daily land being cleared, vegetation removed and habitat destroyed. The latest craze is to remove all understory especially along roadside by poisoning leaving only tall trees. In an age where we can map everything it seems that detailed mapping of native vegetation is not on the agenda. I would like DELWP to work with local shires and map all vegetation in their shire . Once this was done then an agreed figure on what percentage increase should be aimed at each year. This would vary with each shire depending on the level of existing native vegetation. The aim would be to have incremental increases each year. The shire in consultation with DELWP could then develop plans for how to increase coverage each year taking into account both public and private land.</p> <p>By providing suitable habitat native animals will return. In my area the planting of continuous native vegetation corridors has resulted in both bird and native animals returning to the area.</p> <p>In regard to private land which makes up the vast majority of land in the state, incentives need to be given to private landowners. This occurs in some countries overseas and clearly places a value on native vegetation sending a message to the community of its importance. Incentives could be reduced rates for areas revegetated or tax concessions . If a farmer was to take 10ha out of production they should be compensated each year for the loss of production that area was calculated to provide. Tax schemes could be set up so that city dwellers could invest in revegetating private land.</p> <p>Replacement of every tree/native plant removed should be at a rate of at least 10 to 1. The removal of an older tree takes years to grow a tree to the same state. Often replanted areas are not looked after and many plants fail leaving a net loss.</p> <p>There needs to be many more DELWP officers employed in monitoring native vegetation and ensuring that when native vegetation is removed off-sets are in place at 10 to 1. In our area we have one DELWP officer responsible for a huge area and it often take months for them to be able to visit a site or respond to a concern. DELWP need sufficient staff that all requests could be responded to at least within a week and in urgent cases immediately. The general consensus among farmers in my area is knock it down as DWELP will never act and if they do they never prosecute when it is only a few trees. The problem with this is that over the district this adds to thousands of trees every year. I call it clearing by stealth. I have witnessed whole areas of pristine native vegetation cleared by letting large numbers of cattle completely destroy the vegetation.</p> <p>One of the key threats is removal of weeds without any surveying of what native animals use it as a safe habitat. The removal of blackberries along a roadside can mean the death of small native animals such as antechinus and the rufous bristle bird that requires continuous coverage of vegetation to survive. Weeds are often the only safe place for many of our small native to survive in an environment dominated by cats and foxes.</p> <p>A huge threat in our area is the overgrazing of manna gums by koalas. DELWP has been slow to act and by the time they do we will have very few trees left. I have witnessed areas where hundreds of manna gums have been killed by overgrazing. On my place [REDACTED] I rarely saw a koala and estimated a population of only 2 to 4. With the advent of blue gum plantations [REDACTED] the koala population has increased to over 50 as a conservative estimate. I counted 29 during a short walk around the property recently without entering the forest or plantation. The destruction of my native vegetation will be massive when they</p>

harvest the blue gums. I have already lost several trees though overgrazing. The estimate of 400.000 koalas in the south west by a local environmentalist is possibly an underestimate. To place a value on retention of native vegetation something needs to be done urgently by the government to address the over population of koalas who have no natural predators other than vehicles and I see many ending as road kill.

Finally climate change is a key factor. The movement of black wallabies into my area is an example of a species moving to an area of greater food supply. EVC's need to be adjusted to allow for climate change. Plants that once thrived in a wet climate struggle or die in a drying climate.

Sound economic planning is needed when it comes to the push to log areas. Data shows that the benefit through tourism returns many more dollars to the community than logging. The only logging allowed should be through private plantations. Plantation companies should also be engaged in providing a percentage of native vegetation when planting an area. These companies should be consulted as they both provide habitat then remove it without any consideration for the native animals that have take up residence. It is a feast and famine situation when a more sustainable solution needs to be found .

Best of luck in coming up with an ACT that places a high value on our flora and fauna and this is reflected in community attitudes.
