

20th January 2023

To: Submission
Local Land Services Act

Review of native vegetation clearing laws.

My submission is being written from the perspective of a wildlife carer who had spent 15 years raising and releasing macropods, living in the bush experiencing life through their eyes. Until you actually live in their world you cannot truly understand what damage and harm we humans are doing. We are well beyond the APEX predator, we are their worst nightmare!

From the smallest microorganisms, the soil, the leaf litter, the twigs and branches, the shrubs and grasses, trees, old trees, new trees, hollows in trees, fungi etc, each plays an important role. It is the biodiversity that must be preserved. Plants, soil, fungi all provide medicines for the animals. There is so much happening in the bush that we do not know about, we only see the consequences of the damage we are causing. So many native animals are succumbing to illnesses because of us. The bush is VITAL and it must be saved.

Living 40km out of town became such a depressing drive to go shopping - every week I noticed more and more land being cleared, more people just bulldozing large swathes of bush without a thought or a care for the animals who used it. The all pervasive attitude was "it's my land I will do what I want". Land was cleared for a horses, for blueberries, for cows or just because the owners did not want to be surrounded by so much bushland. If they weren't clearing it they were burning it - destroying the homes and habitat of so many animals. Most fires I experienced first hand were all deliberately lit by people on their properties or by National Parks. My neighbour burnt her property and the fire escaped onto my land. The next day I found a burnt Bettong down near my dam - all my pipes were destroyed but it was the death of the Bettong that shattered me. I left my property - no longer able to deal with such thoughtless destruction happening all around me in the Clarence Valley - and nobody stopping it.

I no longer watch the news on TV because every time the Google map of Australia appears I see how much green is disappearing and how what is left is becoming lighter all the time. It must be reversed now - as stated by David Attenborough we must REWILD now. Not just stop destroying but we must start putting it all back.

My submission is that the willful destruction of this country STOP! Replant, re vegetate and renew must be the only way forward.

For landowners there needs to be an Environmental Rating attached to all blocks
Eg Environmental Land 1 - would be pristine, containing threatened species, essential waterways etc.

Environmental Rating 2 - creeks, endemic bush, high density wildlife and fauna species, essential habitat.

Environmental Rating 3 - some endemic bush and animals , etc

Before any land is purchased it must be photographed by drone or satellite, given an Environmental Rating for which the prospective purchaser will then fully understand what must occur on that property, and the rules governing that land and fines that will be applied if any environmental damage is done.

Checking land and assessing damage would be done randomly - plus always when the land was being sold. Fines would be paid on settlement, just like overdue council fines. It is time to make landowners accountable for environmental vandalism. It is time to teach people that owning lands comes with responsibilities - to the animals and plants who belong. It is time to accept we all have a duty of care - that what makes this country great is our biodiversity!

Please make the laws simple, easy to understand and easy to follow. Then they have a far greater chance to succeed.

Thank you for the opportunity to put forward my thoughts.

Gillian Abbott

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