



**TAMWORTH BIRDWATCHERS INC.**

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27<sup>th</sup> January 2023

[policy@lls.nsw.gov.au](mailto:policy@lls.nsw.gov.au)

RE: Tamworth Birdwatchers Incorporated Submission  
Statutory Review of the native vegetation provisions  
(Part A and Schedule 5A and Schedule 5B) of the Local Land Services Act 2013

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Statutory Review of the native vegetation provisions (Part A and Schedule 5A and Schedule 5B) of the Local Land Services Act 2013.

Tamworth Birdwatchers Incorporated (TBW) is a community group with the following objectives:

1. To encourage responsible birdwatching as a family recreation activity.
2. To foster local research into the abundance, distribution, and habitats of Australian bird species.
3. To promote the conservation of birds and their habitats through research and education.

Our group made a submission in 2016 to the “NSW Government Draft Biodiversity Conservation Bill 2016 and the Draft Local Land Services Amendment Bill 2016”. We opposed the new land clearing laws and asked for stronger protection for native bushland and wildlife. We were concerned that the proposed changes would increase land clearing and push wildlife closer to the brink of extinction.

Our concerns were ignored. Weaker native clearing laws were introduced by the NSW Government.

The result is that land clearance has increased 13-fold, from an annual rate of 2,703 ha per year pre-reform to 37,754 ha per year (June2018-May2019).

If this broadscale clearing continues it will result in loss of biodiversity. This action would be out-of-step with the recent international agreement to restore and protect a minimum of each nation by 2030.

How can this be acceptable given the extinction crisis facing NSW and the world?

In our Tamworth Regional Council (TRC) Area we have native bird species which could become extinct in our lifetime. There are recorded sightings of one critically endangered, two endangered and twenty three vulnerable native bird species in our TRC area. They include species such as the Regent Honeyeater and the Swift Parrot.

Weak native vegetation clearing laws are threatening the existence of our native bird species.

Tamworth Birdwatchers Incorporated key concern is:

The inadequate protections for threatened ecological plant communities, and the threatened bird species that depend on them, must be addressed.

Tamworth Birdwatchers Incorporated recommends the following measures to reduce excessive clearing of native vegetation:

1. Replace self-assessment of clearing proposals with mandatory assessments by the LLS.

The average individual does not have the information and skills required to make this judgement.

For example: How many people could correctly identify if a critically endangered Regent Honeyeater was using the trees on their property? How many people understand the importance of small stands of trees, or even single paddock trees, in allowing birds to move across the landscape?

In addition, self-assessment is far too easily motivated, and manipulated by, self-interest.

2. Ensure all biodiversity offsets are like-for-like and must be in the same local area.

For example: Mature White Box trees with nesting hollows should not be replaced with low quality revegetation (eg tube-stock) which will probably take 50- 100 years to form nesting hollows.

3. A co-ordinated monitoring, evaluation, and reporting program to assess the impacts of clearing on threatened species should be mandatory. Assessment of the success of local offsets should be included.
4. The NSW Government should complete and make public the Native Vegetation Regulatory Mapping, showing all categories, for all of NSW, before any further clearing occurs.
5. The NSW Government should enforce tougher penalties for non-compliance of the vegetation clearing rules.
6. The LLS should receive adequate funding to carry out the recommendations listed above.

The NSW Audit Office, Natural Resources Commission and a parliamentary inquiry have all raised serious concerns about the regulation of habitat clearing and the regulatory framework in NSW.

Tamworth Birdwatchers Incorporated believes it is time to restore the balance to NSW native vegetation clearing laws to ensure protection of biodiversity, plus sustainability of farmland.

Could you please respond to our submission and let us know how our concerns will be addressed? We request that we are kept informed as this review proceeds.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Denise Kane

(President, Tamworth Birdwatchers Incorporated)

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