

**From:** Malcolm Fisher [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 27 January 2023 1:08 PM  
**To:** LLS Policy Mailbox  
**Subject:** Submission to the statutory review of NSW native vegetation clearing rules (Part 5A of the Local Land Services Act 2013)

Dear Reviewers,

Everyone knows that the amount of broad-scale land clearing that has been allowed to occur in NSW over recent years is a tragic disgrace. It has seen our unique landscapes degraded, diminished and despoiled. Beautiful and diverse wildlife has been pushed to extinction

It was the former premier (and my local MP) Mike Baird, who was responsible for the collapse of NSW environmental legislation. His 2015 election promise to the National Party resulted in NSW Liberals scrapping laws that protected threatened species and native vegetation.

The [Threatened Species Act](#), [Native Vegetation Act](#) and parts of the [National Parks and Wildlife Act](#) were repealed and replaced with the [Biodiversity Conservation Act](#) and the [Local Land Services Amendment Act](#) which resulted in massive land clearing, a huge loss of biodiversity and the end of public interest legal challenge rights.

In 2016, [a report](#) on native vegetation clearing showed clearing had leapt from 40,500 hectares in 2011/12 to 105,900 hectares in 2012/13. Destruction of the native vegetation continued under Baird's legislative changes and then under subsequent Liberal leaders.

A NSW Audit Office report in 2019 demonstrated almost [170,000 hectares](#) had been cleared over the previous 18 months.

Alongside the *Biodiversity Conservation Act*, a [Biodiversity Offsets Scheme](#) was approved '*to avoid, minimise and offset the impacts of proposed development and land use change on biodiversity*'. A regulation allowed the proponent to buy credits, establish its own offset site or pay the [Biodiversity Conservation Trust](#) to find the offset. Needless to say, this scheme has been a disaster for our environment too and it has been exposed as nothing more than a corrupt backdoor to enable destructive development.

COP 15 recently detailed how important it was to protect biodiversity not least for its vital role in combatting climate change.

Government's role should surely be as a leader in environmental conservation not at the forefront of destroying our vital life support systems. The Discussion Paper released as part of the review of land clearing laws doesn't even consider the disastrous impacts on biodiversity and the current law's self-assessment codes are a cruel sham

Astonishingly the policy objectives barely consider wildlife protection and part 5A even facilitates the clearing of koala habitats which are on track to become extinct by 2050.

The Land Clearing laws must be urgently amended to protect our flora, fauna, waterways, soils and landscapes. This had been achieved, to some degree, before Premier Baird unravelled the laws. If drastic change doesn't happen, the NSW government will be presiding over more extinctions and increased environmental despoliation- contravening a whole range of international agreements and conventions. The community demands so much better.

Malcolm Fisher

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