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From: Tom Ferrier [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 26 January 2023 7:04 PM
To: LLS Policy Mailbox
Subject: Submission to the Native Vegetation Clearing Rules Review

Submission to the Native Vegetation Clearing Rules Review

To whom it may concern

I welcome the opportunity to comment on the laws governing native vegetation clearance in NSW.

Soon after the introduction of the current laws in 2016 the EDO ran an information evening in Port Macquarie. Locals concerned about the impact of these weakened laws on native habitat and threatened species were surprised at the high attendance and the number of unfamiliar faces. After EDO gave an overview of the laxness of the new laws the unfamiliar attendees left the meeting. Via several questions they asked they had identified themselves as local rural landholders and farmers who were reassured they could begin unregulated clearing on their properties.

And clear they have. The common sight in my local rural area on the mid-north coast is clearing of wide corridors along fence lines with remnant trees and shrubs then bulldozed onto stacks and windrows for subsequent burning. Under the previous laws a couple of problem trees may have been removed along a fence line to facilitate a new fence, but certainly not a clearfell of valuable corridor. I have also noticed this trend when travelling to other localities and it is not just confined to fence lines.

This trend statewide has resulted in a 13 fold increase in vegetation clearing rates for NSW since 2016 pushing threatened species closer to extinction. The situation is so bad that NSW has the dubious international distinction of being rated by WWF a hotspot for vegetation clearing along with Brazil.

The current law's self-assessment codes and the much discredited biodiversity offsets have allowed clearing on private land to reach 37,754ha per annum.

The government's own Natural Resources Commission has recommended that the roles and responsibilities for monitoring and enforcing the laws need to be reviewed. The government's Audit Office also highlighted the lack of effective monitoring.

These laws need to be reviewed and reformed as a matter of urgency. Remnant vegetation on private land provides vital habitat for a myriad of threatened species including the koala. It also helps to mitigate climate change as the best known means of drawing down carbon. NSW will lose species if the current regime is allowed to continue.

Sincerely

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