

Response ID ANON-4EM2-EKMOV-B

Submitted to **Native vegetation issues paper**

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Your details

1 What is your name?

Name:

Angus King

2 Can we publish your response?

Yes, you may publish my response in full

3 What is your email address? (optional)

Email:

[REDACTED]

4 What is your postcode? (optional)

Postcode:

[REDACTED]

5 Do your views officially represent those of an organisation?

No, these are my personal views

If yes, please specify the name of your organisation.:

6 Which of the following best describes the group or person you represent?

Private citizen

If other, please specify.:

7 Which of the following best describes the sector you represent?

Not applicable (private citizen)

If other, please specify.:

8 Are there specific parts of your submission that you want to keep confidential?

If yes, please outline which specific parts of your submission must be kept confidential and explain why. :

n/a

A State native vegetation policy

9 Referring to the proposed policy objective statements below, how well do you support each one in guiding our development of a policy?

Objective 1 matrix - Objective 1:

Supported

Please explain in the text box below.:

Agree with the need for consistent management. However, the environment outcomes must be considered the number one priority. As noted in the issue paper our vegetation (and fauna) is unique in the world. We need to preserve as much as possible for the future of all. Special consideration also needs to be made to conserve any remaining native vegetation in those areas of the state that have been over-cleared, such as the Wheatbelt and Swan Coastal Plain.

Objective 2 matrix - Objective 2:

Strongly supported

Please explain in the text box below.:

Our native vegetation is a unique asset that must be preserved as much as possible for ecological and environmental reasons and to protect biodiversity which is under threat from land clearing, over-exploitation and climate change. The native vegetation can provide economic benefit without being destroyed.

Objective 3 matrix - Objective 3:

Strongly supported

Please explain in the text box below.:

Some parts of the State, such as the Wheatbelt, Swan Coastal Plain, and potentially the banded iron formations of the Pilbara, have been (or have the potential to be) over-cleared. It is essential to retain any native vegetation in these regions.

10 What opportunities are presented by the development of a State Native Vegetation Policy focused on how government manages vegetation?

Please provide your answer in the text box below.:

The development of such a policy has the potential to enhance the protection of our unique native vegetation. Over time it will become more noticeable across, the state, nation and the world at large, that the best value of any native vegetation (or similar) will be in its retention and rehabilitation. It is an opportunity to reset the "mindset" that land clearing for supposed economic gain has priority. As we begin to deal with the increasing effects of climate change the sequestration of carbon in the landscape will become increasingly important.

Better information

11 How do you use native vegetation data within your sector? (Choose as many options as you require)

Other

If you have chosen 'other', please specify:

As a private citizen I can use some of the information available to visit and appreciate areas of either unique or "special" value to me. Or if I choose not to visit I can rest easy that such places will exist for others to visit both now and into the future

12 Which of the following elements of better information provision would be most relevant to your sector? (Choose as many options as you require)

Evidence-base for decisions

If you have chosen 'other', please specify:

It is extremely important that decisions on the clearing (and protection) of native vegetation should be made with the best available evidence. Where the evidence is inadequate or suspect any decision must take a conservative approach - it is impossible to replace what has been destroyed/cleared.

Transparency of the decision process is also important.

13 What other opportunities are presented by improved information and improved access to information?

Please provide your answer in the text box below.:

Provision of a comprehensive and complete "picture" of any region or area would provide the best chance of the correct decisions on development and restoration to be made.

Better regulation

14 Which of the following elements of better regulation would be most important to your sector? (Please rank your top three)

Rank better reg elements - Improved protection for native vegetation:

1

Rank better reg elements - Ensuring development is sustainable:

Rank better reg elements - Streamlined regulation for cost saving:

Rank better reg elements - Clearer requirements for business certainty:

Rank better reg elements - Improved assessment timeframes:

Rank better reg elements - Transparent, evidence-based decisions:

2

Rank better reg elements - Improved compliance and enforcement of unauthorised clearing:

3

Rank better reg elements - Equitable treatment of all proponents:

Rank better reg elements - Confidence in the regulatory system for all stakeholders:

Rank better reg elements - Other:

If you selected Other, please provide further information.:

15 What other opportunities are presented by better regulation?

Please provide your answer in the text box below.:

Better regulation can tip the balance back in favour of protection of our unique vegetation and biodiversity - for perpetuity - rather than short (or medium) term exploitation.

A bioregional approach

16 Which of the following elements are the most important to you/your sector? (Please rank your top three)

Rank bioregional elements - 1. Transparent outcomes and objectives:

Rank bioregional elements - 2. Leveraging local knowledge:

Rank bioregional elements - 3. Strategic and innovative approach to conflicting interests:

Rank bioregional elements - 4. Clear targets and thresholds:

3

Rank bioregional elements - 5. Planned approach to dealing with cumulative impacts:

1

Rank bioregional elements - 6. Effective monitoring and evaluation framework:

2

Rank bioregional elements - 7. Supporting public-private partnerships for conservation:

Please explain in the text box below.:

Dealing with cumulative impacts is the most important. Without any overarching understanding of the impact of current clearing and exploitation of vegetation it is possible to make the wrong decisions to protect those areas under most threat.

Without monitoring, evaluation and prosecution of illegal activity the regulations will be a waste

17 What other opportunities are presented by a bioregional approach?

Please explain in the text box below.:

A bioregional approach should help better protect those regions that either have already, or have the potential to be, over-cleared.

18 What concerns are presented by a bioregional approach, for your sector?

Please explain in the text box below.:

As well as monitoring those regions most under threat we don't want to ignore the other regions, such that they undergo the same fate in the future.

It is also important to ensure genetic diversity across a bioregion and to consider those species or habitats that span an, in some ways, arbitrary regional boundary

Other initiatives

19 What initiatives do you think would work best to improve native vegetation outcomes in your region?

Pricing, incentives and markets (e.g. biodiversity banking, offsets, carbon farming etc), Aboriginal land management, Pastoral diversification, Nature-based or cultural tourism, Private land management

Please explain in the text box below.:

All initiatives have the potential to work best in certain situations and regions.

However, if I had to choose one over the others I would choose pricing, incentives and markets. As mentioned in one of the first questions, the importance of preservation and enhancement of native vegetation is going to become of increasing importance as we address the impacts of climate change. This issue just adds to the already important values of native vegetation in terms of ecology, social, cultural, spiritual aspects (not to mention economic value as well).

20 What else could be done to improve the management of native vegetation to arrest the decline of native vegetation extent and condition?

Please provide your answer in the text box below.:

Most importantly, we need to value native vegetation above purely economic measures.

Having a region, such as the South West, recognised as an international biodiversity hotspot has a positive aspect in that it is a region "with significant levels of biodiversity", but it also has a negative aspect in that "it is threatened by human habitation" (it has to have lost at least 70% of its primary vegetation; in the case of the Wheatbelt I understand it is above 90%). Thus, WA has an international obligation to protect and where possible restore this unique region.

Just as important we need to ensure other unique bioregions don't get added to the list.