

## Response ID ANON-4EM2-EKWT-K

Submitted to **Native vegetation issues paper**

Submitted on **2020-02-10 12:46:58**

### Your details

#### 1 What is your name?

Name:

[REDACTED]

#### 2 Can we publish your response?

Yes, you may publish my response anonymously

#### 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?

Yes, I am authorised to submit feedback on behalf of an organisation

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

[REDACTED]

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

Community / Non-government organisation

If other, please specify.:

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

Environmental / NRM

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. :

### 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.:

Our [REDACTED] agrees with Obj 1, we wish to add one remark: "striking a balance" in environmental/development decisions. Since European settlement commenced in our state most decisions/actions have been heavily skewed towards development (clearing of the land & disturbing its hydrology) In recent times the situation remains, despite very well researched submissions to halt these actions.

In some bioregions-South west, in particular vast areas of the Wheatbelt, also Swan Coastal Plain, lands have been heavily cleared thus "striking a balance" must mean an end to any further clearing- immediately, otherwise the situation that exists will decline further.

Practical management of our native vegetation must be improved, more resources (funding) needed for thorough, accurate assessment of the remaining areas of vegetation to permit scientific/ accurate assessment of the cumulative impact that has already occurred & where possible linking this to earlier similar activities.

##### Objective 2 matrix - Objective 2:

Strongly supported

##### Please explain in the text box below.:

Our [REDACTED] strongly supports the aim of Obj. 2, particularly in relation to "conservation & restored" & to include ecological function.

However, "strategic" conservation must NOT protecting a few highest value remnants. In areas & vegetation types that have been over-cleared, strategic conservation mandates that all remaining remnants be protected , with all further clearing applications being rejected. [REDACTED] is strongly of the view that this is the only way forward to achieve the proposed objective.ch

**Objective 3 matrix - Objective 3:**

Strongly supported

**Please explain in the text box below.:**

[REDACTED] supports Obj. 3 as long as the scale of assessment & thus the protection afforded is scale appropriate & makes sure that all remaining ecological communities are recognised.

**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 government has an opportunity, through this policy and changes to the EP Act, to:

- Dedicate resources to a rigorous assessment of what native vegetation remains, its quality and ecological function, and to use this when assessing impacts including cumulative impacts.
- Use best knowledge to determine targets for how much of each bioregion and its constituent ecological communities should be retained in perpetuity. Given the trends noted in most scientific papers and the most recent State of the Environment Report for WA, in some bioregions (eg: Swan Coastal Plain and the Wheatbelt) no further clearing should be permitted.
- Use existing legislation (acquisition or resumption), and if necessary create new legislation, to acquire lands. Allocate funds to purchase lands that are identified as required for retention as native vegetation and to ensure or at least give some opportunity for vegetation communities and their associated fauna to survive in perpetuity.
- Prohibit rezoning of land without proper consideration of all values.
- Ensure that Government agencies are transparent and prepared to make tough decisions in favour of the environment rather than only in favour of development.
- Ensure that the natural environment is genuinely valued by the government and it's agencies in alignment with the Minister Dawson's comments: "Western Australia's unique ecology and extraordinary biodiversity are vital to our State's character, culture and economy" "Our aim is to strike the right balance between protecting the environment and delivering a strong economic outlook - for now and future generations" [Noting however that the 'right balance' requires a rebalancing in favour of the environment

**Better information**

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

To plan for conservation, To plan for restoration

If you have chosen 'other', please specify:

**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:

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

**Please provide your answer in the text box below.:**

It is clear that there is a serious information deficit in environmental management in WA. None of the proposed objectives of a Native Vegetation Policy can be met if this remains the case. Deficits include:

- Insufficient up-to-date mapping of the extent and condition of native vegetation, particularly in the highly-cleared Southwest
- Insufficient mapping of vegetation types and ecological assets
- Insufficient assessment of the scale and impact of legal and illegal clearing
- Insufficient compliance data on approved clearing.

There is an important opportunity to remedy these deficits through the development of this Policy.

**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:

3

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

2

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.:

A re-balancing of decisions in favour of conservation in areas, also for ecological communities, where over-clearing has occurred. There is a dire need for substantially better/ stricter adherence to these regulations so as to achieve a TRUE balance.

## 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:

1

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:

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

2

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

3

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

Please explain in the text box below.:

1. Transparency leads to confidence & trust. These should include clear statements pertaining to the regions & vegetation communities that are adversely effected by over clearing. All further clearing applications to be rejected for these regions.

2. Cumulative impacts- WA's native veg'n continues to be impacted by the 'death of a thousand cuts' (clearing activities), there is a long past need for this to be halted & reversed in many regions. (replantings of native species.)

3. Effective monit'g & eval. Without this accompanied diligently by an effective compliance enforcement mechanism no amount of policies, planning or regulations will be effective.

### 17 What other opportunities are presented by a bioregional approach?

Please explain in the text box below.:

This bio-regional approach will provide a more effective , inclusive mechanism for dealing with issues i.e. HOW much native vegetation should be provided protection& where.

WHICH highest-priority regions & vegetation types require URGENT attention.

HOW can PROBLEMS that have already occurred in over-cleared regions be avoided in other regions.

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

Please explain in the text box below.:

Our branch is concerned that errors of the past are not repeated. That bioregions with SIGNIFICANT native vegetation be retained against development; that there be very low thresholds for any clearing approvals , with severe penalties for any transgressions.; that areas not yet over-cleared be diligently monitored & due diligence be given prior to the granting of any perceived necessary clearing approvals.

Bio-regions with significant native veg'n need to be recognised , also those ecological regions which cover only a small extent of a region/ area . These precious areas need our protection by mapping , passing on info to local entities etc, so they can remain for future generations & the correct balance of their natural

communities.

## 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

**Please explain in the text box below.:**

1. These initiatives /markets need to be developed so as to result in advantageous conservation outcomes (plantings & care of native vegetation type around shopping centres etc ; in carparks -reduce impacts of heat sinks) that offset the economic advantages of any type of commercial/medical/industrial parks.

2. Where appropriate & implemented correctly, can lead to better conservation outcomes & sustainability.

3. Should include nature based actions- may include value adding actions for tourism but carried out with re-plantings of appropriate native vegetation to off-set buildings etc.

### 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.:**

A clear policy must be put in place that there will be no further clearing of native vegetation in those areas of the state that have been over-cleared. For example, some regions in the Wheatbelt and Swan Coastal Plain have had >90% of their native vegetation cleared. In such areas, no more can be lost. This includes vegetation corridors along roadsides.

There is also an important opportunity in the development of a native vegetation policy to develop incentive mechanisms to preserve and restore native vegetation, as an important complement to regulatory mechanisms.

The policy setting should explicitly recognise the importance of biological corridors and of roadside vegetation, which in some areas represents the last remnants of native vegetation in the area and provides the only remaining habitat for some threatened species.

A government-wide policy has the potential to fully implement Bush Forever for the Perth region.

A state-wide native vegetation policy setting should ensure that there is consistency in all clearing-related matters, especially remedying inconsistencies with respect to the many clearing exemptions that presently exist.

There needs to be a clear focus on freeing up alternative land for development in over-cleared bioregions as a first step, rather than relying on outdated and historically poorly informed zoning. The planning process also needs to be more flexible to enable changes to zoning when recent information indicates that lands should not be cleared.

Regulatory relationships between State and local government authorities should be assessed to ensure that the Native Vegetation Policy applies at all levels of government.

Where land is zoned for development and is recognised as high conservation value, a process for resumption and acquisition should be established.

Compensation should be addressed but compensation should not be offered for the loss of a perceived right to degrade the environment.

To ensure certainty for developers while ensuring the protection of our environment:

- All remaining remnant vegetation outside of the existing conservation estate should be mapped and its condition assessed (priority for this should be given to highly-cleared bioregions and subregions);
- Cleared and substantially degraded land that is not currently zoned for development should be identified that could be purchased and traded for land supporting native vegetation;
- A clear policy should be established that remnant vegetation in over-cleared areas of the state will not be approved for clearing. This should be communicated to landowners and potential developers;
- A mechanism should be established for land swaps between areas with native vegetation and areas without.

Incremental annual clearing of small areas should no longer be permitted

## Upload a document

### 21 If you would like to upload a document to support your submission, please upload it here.

**Upload document 1 here::**

No file was uploaded

**Please describe which question(s) document 1 relates to. :**

**Upload document 2 here::**

No file was uploaded

**Please describe which question(s) document 2 relates to. :**