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Submitted to **Native vegetation issues paper**

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Your details

1 What is your name?

Name:

Erin O'Connor

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?

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

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

City of Greater Geraldton

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

Government body

If other, please specify.:

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

Government

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. :

no

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:

Opposed

Please explain in the text box below.:

Support the beginning statement - 'consistent, transparent and strategic'.

Balance cannot be struck between ongoing clearing and degradation of Native Vegetation and economic growth as it is currently occurring. There is a natural limit to the amount that can be cleared prior to either ecological collapse of a system, or the complete removal of that ecosystem. In addition, changes to climatic conditions will compound uncertainty around suitable ecological resilience thresholds, capacity for regeneration/rehabilitation, and effective use of 'off-sets'.

Objective 2 matrix - Objective 2:

Strongly supported

Please explain in the text box below.:

This Objective most clearly sets out the essential function of Native Vegetation protection and rehabilitation. Such protection should be for itself, rather than as a secondary element to economic and social needs.

Objective 3 matrix - Objective 3:

Supported

Please explain in the text box below.:

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.:

- increased resources to enforce existing regulations.
- opportunity to coordinate, or link various pieces of legislation that deal with native vegetation management.
- set a proactive, aspirational and achievable state government policy position that holds the importance of our unique vegetation, and its protection as equally important to economic development.
- any state and bioregional approach must take into account the national and global context - EPBC, Migratory Species, etc
- Must use national and global climate scenarios to plan for the future and guide our actions and regulations
- use strategic environment assessments that recognise previous impacts.
- Aspirational goals are great, but also need SMART objectives to force accountability for this policy.
- streamlining processes should NOT make it easier to clear / impact native vegetation.
- the policy MUST recognise that we have already cleared the majority of native vegetation in this State. It MUST include targets to increase extent and improve condition. It MUST set thresholds for no more clearing.

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, To scope offset opportunities, To inform applications to clear or impact vegetation, For baseline information for monitoring

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.:

- a central system for all decision makers and organisations involved in conservation, rehabilitation and monitoring will enable increased communication between groups, and confidence in the validity of data.
- increased opportunities to add in other data sets, for example fire mapping and history.
- increased opportunities for research organisations to add in data from projects, for example fire ecology, die-back, weed mapping
- synergies with other state and federal mapping systems.
- real-time mapping of clearing, allowing ease of monitoring illegal and legal clearing, and cumulative effects of monitoring.
- increased access to schools to support education projects for students.

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:

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:

3

If you selected Other, please provide further information.:

The cumulative effect of clearing must be considered.

Regulations must aspire and effect the protection of native vegetation. Currently, the focus is on 'balancing' development and clearing. There must be thresholds set, after which no clearing can occur, regardless of the reason. If not, clearing will continue to occur until nothing is left - or what remains is unsustainable, or lost easily through threats such as weeds and fire.

For example, the Shire of Koorda has 14% of native vegetation remaining, Wagin 15%, City of Joondalup 11%, Narembeen 10%, Wongan-Ballidu 7%.

15 What other opportunities are presented by better regulation?

Please provide your answer in the text box below.:

-Improved compliance and reporting.

- Increased enforcement of illegal clearing, and implementation of off-sets.

- identification of priority roads, where the vegetation is protected, and other uses, or maintenance regimes modified to accommodate this.

- online reporting of illegal clearing needs to be followed up by DEWR staff, and maximum penalties applied.

- increased resourcing to enable DEWR staff to undertake site investigations.

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.:

17 What other opportunities are presented by a bioregional approach?

Please explain in the text box below.:

- Easier to target bioregional issues and site specific opportunities.

- Coastal belt vegetation is under heavy threat from use, both recreational, sand mining and residential development. having a specific approach to the coastal / dune belt will enable the particular threats to be understood and dealt with within a more local context.

- at the bioregional level, the statistics for clearing, and total of cumulative clearing stands out more clearly.

- increased local engagement, and capacity to develop partnerships.

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

Please explain in the text box below.:

- early and consistent consultation with regional stakeholders, prior to implementation of a particular framework.

- in highly developed areas (such as Wannaroo / Joondalup) economic drivers and interests will over-ride protection of natural values and ecosystems.

- maintaining connectivity between the regions, both coastal-inland and north-south. This is important culturally and environmentally.

- The reality of resourcing and managing potentially 26 regions. How to coordinate input from local stakeholders - traditional owners, NGOs, local government, without putting the burden of this onto local government or NGOs.

Other initiatives

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

Other

Please explain in the text box below.:

- strong legislation, backed up by financial and personnel resourcing to stop illegal clearing, and prioritise native vegetation protection.

- consistent and adequate funding from the state for rehabilitation works.

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.:

- stop clearing it.
- resource agencies, organisations and individuals to address threats such as weeds, degrading processes, inappropriate fire regimes.
- put some political will into regeneration of native vegetation.
- alter the language of documents such as this policy that continue to aspire to a 'balance' of economic development at any cost, with preservation of increasingly diminishing areas of native vegetation.
- develop a coherent piece of legislation for the PROTECTION of native vegetation, rather than relying on various pieces of legislation that are not consistent with each other, and deal with managing the USE of native vegetation.