

FACT SHEET 6: Submissions raise major concerns

Submissions on the NSW Government's biodiversity review and land-clearing changes closed on 28 June 2016. However, these submissions have not been made available to the public and our understanding is that there is no set timeframe to do so.

This being the case, the Stand Up For Nature Alliance located and summarised a number of submissions by key stakeholders.

Many of these submissions raised major concerns with the NSW Government's proposed changes and urged the government to put the draft legislation on hold or withdraw it altogether.

This is in addition to more than 5500 individual submissions made through the Stand Up For Nature alliance opposing the NSW Government's biodiversity review and land-clearing changes.

Quotes from key stakeholders:

Law Society of NSW: "Has serious concerns ... about the some of the proposed reforms. There do not appear to be the environmental protections measures that exist in the current regime." (p.2 of submission)

Hunter Councils Inc: "Feel that the Exposure Bills will be unable to achieve adequate levels of biodiversity conservation, and should be significantly modified to address these concerns prior to being introduced to Parliament." (p.3 of submission)

Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils: "Extremely concerned by the proposed package of biodiversity legislation reforms as it removes many of NSW's long-held environmental protections." (p.2 of submission)

Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils: "Does not support the proposed reforms as currently designed. We urge the Government to reconsider these reforms, building on the principles of ESD." (p.3 of submission)

Georges River Combined Council Committee Inc: "Is concerned that the legislation does not focus on achieving the best on ground biodiversity outcomes at a landscape and regional scale." (p.1 of submission)

Sydney Coastal Councils Group: "Is seriously concerned by the proposed package of biodiversity legislation reforms ... the reforms constitute a severe weakening of environmental protections in NSW... funding cannot compensate for inadequate legal protection." (p.1 of submission)

Northern Rivers Regional Organisation of Councils: "NOROC are concerned that the proposed legislation will (at least on the far north coast) lead to poorer biodiversity and sustainability outcomes as well as significant additional complexity, administrative burdens and costs for local government." (p2 of submission)

Local Government NSW: "It is likely this will leave local government administering even more complex, time consuming and confusing processes than currently exist. This could have significant resource implications." (p4 of submission)

Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists: "Express our strong concerns with a number of proposed changes to native vegetation laws in NSW, which if not addressed will breach the government's election promise to 'enhance the State's biodiversity for the benefit of current and future generations'." (p.1 of submission)

Royal Zoological Society of NSW: "Are strongly of the opinion that the proposed Biodiversity Conservation Bill is a step backwards for

conservation and a step forward for those who view nature and its conservation as an impediment to development.” (p.1 of submission)

National Trust (NSW Chapter): “Opposes the enactment of the Biodiversity Conservation Bill and the Local Land Services Bill in their present form as they will promote major increases in land clearance in NSW, do not provide a creditable framework for the protection of biodiversity in NSW and will counteract Australian Government moves to restrict land clearing as a means of ameliorating the impacts of global climate change.” (p.1 of submission)

BirdLife Australia: “The NSW Government’s proposed biodiversity legislation and policy package as currently drafted removes many long held environmental protections and represents a serious backward step for environmental law and policy in the State.” (p1 of submission)

NSW Aboriginal Land Council: “Does not support the proposed reforms in their current form.” (p.1 of submission)

Planning Institute of Australia – NSW Division: “At present, parts of the Bill appear to be inconsistent with long standing planning practices and changes mooted for planning legislation which aim to bring the planning system in NSW up to international best practice standards.” (p.2 of submission)

Housing Industry Association – NSW: “the measures also represent a shift in the assessment, conservation and treatment of land which necessitates absolute transparency across the entire regulatory package. the draft regulations must be released prior to the Bills proceeding.” (p3 of submission)

Centre for Ecosystems Science, University of NSW: “Cannot support the associated pieces of legislation in their current form.” (p.4 of submission)

NSW Minerals Council: “OEH staff indicates that the [Biodiversity Assessment Methodology] BAM

and all of its products will not be completed until September 2017. Importantly the Biodiversity Conservation Act should not commence until all of the products, including the BAM (and any products that underlie it) have undergone testing and are finalised.” (p.7 of the submission)

Cotton Australia: “The Government must release the draft map for a further, full consultation period before it becomes live and part of the legislation.” (p.1 of submission)

NSW Farmers Association: “Cannot back the State Government’s draft biodiversity reforms unless drastic changes are made ... the draft legislation in its current form was unworkable for farmers and ‘significant amendments were needed from start to finish’.” (Media Release NSW Farmers Association June 28, 2106)

For a more comprehensive summary of key submissions, please contact hello@standupfornature.org.au