

Submission on Brigalow and Nandewar Cypress Forest Management

by

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I wish to make a submission to the Natural Resources Commission's assessment of "active and adaptive management of cypress forests in Brigalow and Nandewar State Conservation Areas (Zone 3 of the Brigalow and Nandewar Community Conservation Area)."

1. Terms of Reference.

Do not insult us by using weasel words with no clearly defined meaning. I am referring to the use of the term "active and adaptive management", which has no clear meaning. How can we comment on something that is undefined?

2. Identify approaches, methods and suggested next steps to develop.....

Again, we do not know what is being considered. I can only surmise that this is bureaucratic double-speak for considering timber harvesting in Zone 3 CCACs.

You are aware that Zone 3 was set aside for conservation, recreation and mineral extraction. It was not set aside for timber harvesting (that was Zone 4). Bear in mind that the protracted CCAC reserve system was developed after a long period of public consultation and included recompense to the timber industry and generous offers of jobs to displaced workers. The decision has been accepted by the community and it would be "stirring up a hornet's nest" to revisit the conclusions and try to change decisions made. An Act of Parliament would be required to change the zoning and that would be a most retrograde step.

I note that the first aim of the CCAC Agreement of 11 June 2009 provided for "the permanent conservation of land, their natural systems and biodiversity".

Zone 1, national park status, as well as Zones 2 & 3, are of immense importance for conservation of threatened and near-threatened species such as the Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Brown Treecreeper, Turquoise Parrot, Barking Owl, Speckled Warbler, Hooded Robin and Diamond Firetail, as well as Pilliga Mouse. Many of these bird species depend on extensive tracts of land and large trees with hollows for their continued survival. They cannot survive if the area is subject to an extractive industry, eg. forestry, where large important habitat trees are logged.

If Zone 3 is "up for grabs" then why not Zone 2 – Aboriginal reserve? Are the local Aboriginal groups aware that Zone 2 lands may be used for purposes not agreed under the Act?

Zone 4 is already subject to extraordinary pressures from extractive industries (coal seam gas), against the intention of the Act.

By countenancing important and ill-defined changes to the Agreement, the whole Agreement is undermined. What confidence can people have in government when successive governments seek to change long-standing laws and agreements on political whim?

I strongly urge you to stand firm against pressures to change the management of Zone 3 lands.

Dr Helen Stevens

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