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Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, April 24, 2025 3:40:42 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, April 24, 2025 4:02:23 PM
Time Spent: 00:21:41
IP Address: [REDACTED]

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Q1

First name

Karen

Q2

Last name

Benhar

Q3

Email

[REDACTED]

Q4 Yes
Can we contact you about your submission (if needed)?

Q5 Yes
Can we add your email to our mailing list for occasional updates on this topic?

Q6 I am representing an NGO or community group.
What best describes you?

Q7 Statewide NSW
What best describes your main regional interest?

Q8

I agree to have my submission published with my name.

Your submission may be published. If you do not want your personal details or responses published, please tell us here.

Q9

What do you consider is the most significant action(s) we can undertake to protect and restore biodiversity and ecosystem function on private lands?

The NSW Government needs to remove the code-base land clearing allowances under the Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code 2018, that are empowered by the Local Land Services Act 2013. These laws rely on land-owners self-assessing whether they can clear their land or not, which enables careless and rampant land clearing. After these laws came into force in 2017, land clearing rates on private property have tripled. Over the past five years an average of 84,000 hectares of bush has been cleared on private properties. This is an unsustainable and unacceptable level of clearing.

The NSW Government needs to introduce a clear and meaningful approval pathway that aims to protect habitat and reduce land clearing. The approval system needs to have Government oversight and transparent reporting.

Under current rules in NSW, land cleared before 1990 is exempt from regulation. This is outdated and needs to be changed. Such lands may now contain native regrowth nearly 35 years old. New research has shown regrown forests and woodlands can provide valuable habitat and food for threatened species after an average of 15 years. For example, some species like the koala use regrowth as young as nine years old. I note some species, like greater gliders need much older mature forests so it is important to have policies that retain both young and old forests.

Q10

How can we further improve soil, water and vegetation management to protect and restore biodiversity while delivering sustainable economic outcomes?

The natural environment protects our wildlife as well as the soil, water and vegetation. Education on the importance of the natural environment and practices such as regenerative agriculture and First Nations cultural/cool burns are a win-win for the farmer and the environment. Why is there so much resistance to championing and adopting these innovative ways of restoring the health of the land? Is the LLS embracing these new ways or still giving outdated advice to just pour chemicals on the land?

Q11

What do you consider is the most effective way to further support and enable landholders to deliver sustainable land management and production outcomes?

LLS needs to work with champions such as Charles Massey and First Nations people as well as ecological restoration experts to save the environment and the wildlife it supports. Business as usual is no longer good enough.

Q12

Is there any other information about this topic you would like to share with us?

I recommend the book Call of the Reed Warbler by Charles Massey. The most interesting part is how a farm that has changed tack and embraced regenerative agriculture becomes a oddity and often a pariah in the area despite their success.
