

#44

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Page 1

Q1

First name
Rosemary

Q2

Last name
Stapleton

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 Central West
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 land clearing laws that came into effect in 2017 have obviously not worked as there has been a tripling of land clearing rates on private land. The laws that rely on landowners to self-assess have not worked. A better and clearer approval and regulatory system must be introduced that is transparent, has proper accountability and government oversight. Private assessors, if paid by the landholder, are in a conflict-of-interest situation.

The fact that land cleared before 1990 is exempt from regulation is inappropriate as threatened species such as Greater Gliders and Superb Parrots rely on hollows in trees that can take between 80 and 100 years to develop. Land cleared before 1990 must be included in any new land clearing approval and regulatory system that is developed.

Q10

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

Many studies have been done that show the benefits of protecting native vegetation and the biodiversity that uses this habitat; be it soil fungi, insects or shade giving trees. This information needs to be made available to farmers, possibly through workshops or a one-stop shop website. Landholders also need to be informed of the laws that apply to land clearing.

Broad-scale land clearing should be banned unless it can be shown to maintain or improve environmental outcomes. Any assessment must be made by an independent assessor. A significant challenge is in broad scale cropping areas where new large-scale machinery does not work well with scattered remnant areas. The value of developing corridors of vegetation that allows easier use of this large machinery should be rewarded.

If critically endangered ecological communities or areas that support an 'important population' of a listed threatened species are present on private land, there must be incentives provided to landholders to protect them. An example is the work of the Biodiversity Conservation Trust. There must not be any offset scheme as nowadays there are few areas where suitable offsets can be found.

Q11

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

Local Landcare Groups do good work in promoting sustainable land management through educating landowners on regenerative farming, protection of paddock trees and support in revegetation and increasing landscape connectivity. However, they have very limited resources and do not exist in every community. They often work with Local Land Services staff but again they do not have the capacity or funds to cover all areas. OFNCS has also seen the benefits of landholders conserving parcels of land under the Biodiversity Conservation Trust. All these organizations engage with and educate landholders and should be further supported with funds and staffing.

Better strategies need to be developed to inform landholders of the rules regarding land clearing and the value of protecting biodiversity. A native vegetation regulatory map must be available and easily accessed so landholders can become informed and educated. There needs to be just one easily accessible database where landholders can find information on what biodiversity is on or nearby their property. They should be rewarded for recording significant species that are found on their land.

Q12

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

Orange Field Naturalist and Conservation Society is a group of amateur and professional scientists and community members. It is based in the Central West NSW which is in one of the most heavily cleared regions in Australia. All remnant bushland here and elsewhere is critical for survival of endangered woodland species. OFNCS members have seen areas where vegetation has been cleared, biodiversity lost and local extinctions occur. New laws and systems must be introduced to prevent even further declines.
