

10th.January 2011

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R.E.Sokolowski B.Sc

The Hon.F. Sartor A.O. M.P.
Minister for Climate Change and the Environment
Level 35 Governor Macquarie Tower
1-Farrer Place Sydney NSW 2000.

Ref: New Proposals for Env.Outcomes Assessment Methodology(EOAM).

Dear Minister Sator

SUBMISSION.

PROPOSAL UNDER Clause 25(1) (c) of the NATIVE VEGETATION REGULATION 2005.

New Chapter in the Environmental Outcomes Assessment Methodology(EOAM).

I present my observations to you on these new proposal (EOAM) for your consideration. I invite your attention to my personal career details listed in P2 of this Submission which qualifies me to comment on this proposal.

FIRSTLY

A most critical deficiency noted in this whole document is no reference whatsoever to **Ecological Sustainable Development (ESD)** – the major consideration factor which must take precedence in any broad scale land clearing proposals that will destroy the ecological integrity and biodiversity of the area. Off-sets is a “much loved” proposal by developers and sadly has been much abused due to the neglect of regulatory application and supervisory authoritative scrutiny in NSW.

SECONDLY

I disagree entirely with this statement under Section 8(8.1) Introduction page 1:

- Quote “*the clearing of native vegetation that falls within one or more of the vegetation categories in 8.4.1. is to be regarded as improving or maintaining environmental outcomes under the Native Vegetation Act 2003*”.Unquote.

This is complete utter nonsense. It does in fact offer an opportunity for proponents to present submissions which attempt to convince that **a presented Off-Set** is an acceptable remediation arrangement for carrying out environmental destruction. Undisturbed and established communities, habitats and biodiversity in proposed Off-Set areas **are complimentary to that area** and in no way can compensate for the losses incurred by any form of broadscale clearing. Such a proposal will, in my opinion, create **an overall permanent loss in biodiversity and ecological integrity** which can be critical to migratory fauna habitats, transit and protected areas and food resources.

THIRDLY

Streamline assessments of certain vegetation categories **Section 8 p.1-9** needs to be completely re-written in commonsense language. It is confusing, badly formed, contains questionable scientific terminology and is a mixed match of bureaucratic decision making with so many variables in its current presentation. I am of the opinion that it was constructed by “a desk top operator” without field experience but derived from various reports and/or submissions. The whole concept of this exercise should be to present a simplistic explanatory understanding of procedures and definitions to be undertaken – this is not in evidence.

- **8.3 Definitions p1-4. and • 8.4 The Improve or Maintain Test p.4-9.**

What a confusing mess this is where assessments have to be undertaken of groundcover,ploughed areas, indigenous species, fallow land, regrowth but not protected regrowth, not viable, of low viability and unviable, connectedness and so on and so on. It is a maze in its present form with Regional Values ranging in 10%. 70% a combination of 2Aand 2B (Page 8), management actions for for increasing Site Value (5.3.4 of the EOAM), replanting around existing and scattered and other isolated trees etc.(p9) and so on. It is a breath taking exercise in intensive management and a “paper nightmare”

2.

I conclude by stating that **too much emphasis** has been given to **Off-Sets** which is an attempt to justify broad scale clearing by developers and land management uses. It is a dangerous system to adopt and “a can of worms to be managed” when the prize is manipulation, by unscrupulous operators for financial gain, irrespective of the probability of environmental degradation and accumulated loss of wildlife communities.

In its present form, this proposed Environmental Outcomes Assessment Methodology needs to be seriously reviewed and rewritten. Due to the complexity of this issue there can be no possibility of completing any form of advice to the Minister by the 4th.February 2011 in this important matter and I challenge any proposal to the contrary - it is just not possible.

R.E.Sokolowski Personal Information:

20 years years of public service. Retired 1992 as Manager of the Division of Wildlife Research (Flora), Dept. of Conservation and Land Management W.A. Scientific research duties and associated laboratory material interpretation. Protection of W.A. Threatened Species and associated environmental land management practices on Crown Land//Reserves, State Conservation Areas, National Parks, Off-Shore Islands in the marine environment of the Dampier Archipelago(NW Pilbara Area/s) and State deserts.

NSW Ministerial appointments to:

- The Community Consultative Committee on State Forests Central Coast for the year 1995, the Central Coast NPWS Advisory Committee 1995-99 and to the Central Coast Regional Vegetation Committee 2001-03 in preparation of a Regional Vegetation Management Plan.

I believe my earlier career has enabled me to contribute my voluntary services to these positions detailed and to comment on these new EOAM proposals which are now the subject of your consideration. I really do believe that a careful scrutiny of this EOAM is worthy of in-depth re-consideration and appraisal.

Thankyou.

R.E.Sokolowski B.Sc..
Conservation and Environmentalist.

c.c. Natural Resources Commission. EOAM Proposals. F.Y.I.