

TSO

From: Don White [whitedon@bigpond.net.au]
Sent: Friday, 28 August 2009 7:50 AM
To: Felicity Calvert
Subject: RE: River Red gum assessment terms of reference

River Red gum assessment terms of reference

Dear NRC,

The Nature Conservation Council is the peak environmental non-government organisation in NSW which has been advocating for the environment for over 50 years on behalf of our member groups. NCC is pleased that the NRC has been given the task of assessing the River Red Gum forests.

It is crucially important that the Natural Resources Commission rapidly assess the extreme threats facing the River Red Gum wetlands and recommend strong conservation action to avert those threats.

NCC makes the following comments on the terms of reference:

The environmental crisis facing River Red Gum is severe - it is already well past the eleventh hour. A decision needs to be implemented and new National Parks created before the end of the year.

- It is crucial that the precautionary principle is applied in full – given the paucity of detailed environmental survey in the region. It is important that proper precaution is applied on the side of environmental protection.
- NCC supports the inclusion in the terms of reference of water management and the impacts of climate change on future water availability.
- The identification of large new National Parks should be specified in the terms of reference as a key outcome from the assessment.
- NCC supports the inclusion of EPBC matters in the assessment but believe that interim protections should be imposed to protect Ramsar wetlands from illegal patch-clearfelling while the assessment takes place.
- It should be clear how the requirements of the EPBC Act will be met, and specifically what process under that Act will be applied and how the approval process will proceed.
- Stronger and more specific involvement of indigenous people and consultation with indigenous communities should be included in the Terms of Reference. The TOR should require close investigation of Aboriginal Ownership of conservation reserves wherever sought by Traditional Owners.

Yours faithfully *Donald White*

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