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Native Veg Act 'should be abolished'

RODERICK MAKIM
18 Dec, 2014 01:35 PM

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Deputy Premier and NSW Nationals leader Troy Grant.

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The Native Vegetation Act should be abolished

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UPDATED 4pm: NSW's controversial Native Vegetation Act should be scrapped, according to NSW Deputy Premier Troy Grant.

Mr Grant flagged potentially scrapping current Native Vegetation Act following the release of an expert panel's report - the *Biodiversity Legislation Review*, which released its final report to the State government.

The panel called for a new piece of legislation to replace the Native Vegetation Act, along with the Threatened Species Conservation Act and parts of the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

"The (Native Vegetation) Act has not met expectations as a central pillar of biodiversity conservation in NSW," the final report stated.

"It has been contentious because of difficulties in implementation and the inequitable distribution of the costs involved, in particular sectors and in particular regions of the state."

The panel found the recommendations would result in reduced compliance burden for landowners and greater potential productivity gains for regulated parties.

Mr Grant said the panel's proposed new legislation would ensure a balanced approach is taken in managing biodiversity, implementing triple bottom line approach to native vegetation.

Triple bottom bottom line assessments seek to balance economic, environmental and social factors.

"The NSW government is yet to form a response to the review but it's pretty clear that based on this independent review, the Native Vegetation Act should be abolished," Mr Grant said.

NSW Farmers' native vegetation spokesman Mitchell Clapham was cautiously optimistic about the report.

"I've only seen the main points so far (but) it looks like a very positive outcome from the review panel," Mr Clapham said.

The panel recommended government establish a biodiversity offset fund, accessible to individual landholders.

Mr Clapham praised this initiative, as well as the triple bottom line approach to native vegetation and land clearing laws was another positive.

"It should have substantial benefit to the farming community... it's now up to the government to see if they accept the recommendations."

NSW Farmers' president Fiona Simson said the report could be the catalyst for the single biggest shift in policy direction on the issue of biodiversity in NSW for a long time.

"We are also encouraged to see farmers recognised as responsible custodians of our land who have a direct interest in looking after the environmental values of the landscape," she said.

"This sentiment reflects what we know at NSW Farmers and one which has been behind our advocacy for reform on native vegetation for nearly a decade."

Environmental groups have warned a repeal of the Native Vegetation Act would be a backward step and pose a threat to wildlife.

"These recommendations, if adopted, will likely lead to more land clearing and loss of species unless the replacement legislation enhances the existing protections," said Nature Conservation Council chief executive Kate Smolski.

WWF national manager of policy Paul Toni was unhappy with the proposal to remove the legal test that requires the local environment to be 'improved or maintained' with any land clearing.

The NSW government will now consider the report and provide a response before the 2015 election.

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THE LAND



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18/12/2014 3:37:39 PM, on The Land

I'm concerned about Mr. Grant and the panel's proposed legislation. In managing biodiversity at this time it would not be wise to weaken the Native Veg Act which is what Mr. Grant proposes to do under the age old coin phrase of 'balanced approach,' which means forget about the environment. Australia continues to have a net loss of biodiversity and the United Nations reports that we are entering an extinction crisis. What does this government and some farmers have against a healthy environment? I know farmers that value vegetation and implement permaculture design. That's what we need now.

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18/12/2014 4:09:16 PM, on The Land

Sure, Hope, keep the Native Veg Act. Remember to pay for stolen property rights associated with it. If you have such strong beliefs you can use your own bank account to pay for them.

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18/12/2014 4:10:58 PM, on The Land

Hope maybe the veg rules should be the same in the suburbs as on farms. Last time I looked mass clearing of all vegetation occurs every time a new subdivision or mine goes in. The rules are not applied evenly across all industries and areas.

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18/12/2014 6:27:11 PM, on The Land

Shows how bad the Act is when 2 of the 4 belong to Wentworth Group & consider it as needing to be scrapped.

Hope, read the Act & list of endangered & threatened species U will find more than 50% are in the Sydney Bioregion which is exempt under the existing Act. Hopefully a new Act won't exclude any parts of the State this time. It won't be open slather either but will be a bit more equitable, reasonable & practical.

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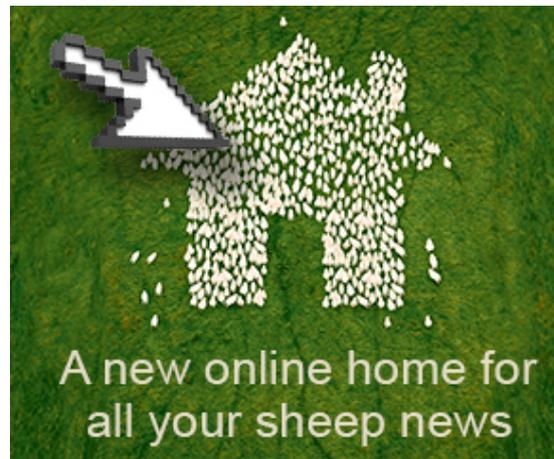
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Roderick Makim

5h

@RoderickMakim

Good effort from PMXI 331 against a close to full strength Eng attack. Would've been interesting if they'd scored that batting 1st #PMXIvENG



Georgie Somerset

7h

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