

Queensland Government Agriculture and Environment Committee  
Parliament House  
Brisbane, Qld 4000

27 November 2015



**Re: THE NATURE CONSERVATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMMENDMENT BILL 2015**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment and feedback regarding the proposed changes to the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, 2015. I am writing to you on behalf of the Christian Venues Association, which serves some 200 providers of outdoor recreation, camps and expeditions across Australia, and this includes 30 in Queensland, which include some of the largest operators in the country.

On Monday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>. I attended a consultation hosted by the Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation (QORF), addressed by Ben Klaassen, Deputy Director General of QPWS. My attendance was in response to concerns expressed to me by members from Queensland that the proposed amendments to the Nature Conservation Act 1992 could restrict access to National Parks and Conservation Parks which have long established use by camping and Outdoor Recreation providers for some of their activities, or that amendments to regulation would make access to the Parks more difficult or complex.

The session provided clarity on a number of issues and it was good to have direct responses honestly to the many questions put during the consultation period. I commend the Minister for the changes proposed which do seek to preserve the natural beauty and wildness of Queensland's magnificent national and conservation parks, which are indeed part of the heritage of all Australians and for ethical access to these areas for educational and recreational purposes.

The Outdoor sector which I represent has core purposes which align closely to the governments' desired outcomes. We seek to get people of all ages outside and into the natural environment, to experience the beauty and serenity of the coast, the mountains, lakes and bush. We seek to educate and develop a love for such places and instil strong values of personal responsibility to preserve and care for the land and its natural resources.

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Our members alone take close to one million school age children into the bush every year, and actively promote these values and understandings. These young people are the generation who will take on the leadership of the nation and the responsibility for caring for our natural heritage. Access to National and Conservation Parks is a key to this vital education process.

Therefore, we support QORF and other interest groups in proposing that the following wording, currently used with regard to the management of National Parks, be included in the wording for Conservation Parks [Section 21(1) ] of the Act as well, so that there is consistency and clarity which addresses the concerns of CVA members.

(1) A conservation park is to be managed to—

- (a) conserve and present the area's cultural and natural resources and their values; and
- (b) provide for the permanent conservation of the area's natural condition to the greatest possible extent; and
- (c) provide opportunities for educational and recreational activities in a way consistent with the area's natural and cultural resources and values
- (d) ensure that any commercial use of the area's natural resources, including fishing and grazing, is ecologically sustainable.

The inclusion of 1(c) makes it clear that 'educational and recreational' use of the parks is a valid use, which is what the Outdoor recreation and education providers would argue. We also urge the Minister to ensure, through the review of current regulation regarding 'permission to use or visit' the parks, that access to the parks for responsible, law-abiding users is maintained and enhanced through simple, uncomplicated processes.

Christian Venues Association appreciates the opportunity to be part of this consultation process and we commend the government's commitment as expressed in the proposed Amendments to make such consultation a consistent practice with regard to any future changes to this Act or other relevant legislation.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Leslie

National Development Officer