



28th November 2015

Agriculture and Environment Committee

Protect the Bush Alliance (PTBA) is an alliance of thirty NGOs and community groups in Queensland and Australia representing over 30,000 people. Our goal is to implement ways of preventing the continuing loss of areas of high conservation values to inappropriate developments. One of the ways we do this is by conducting flora and fauna surveys on properties of high conservation value and on the properties which link them.

Members of PTBA have had and will continue to have, close association with many land holders and communities affected by the major resource developments planned for Queensland, as and when those developments strategically impact on areas of biological significance and diversity.

The Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015

(<https://legislation.govnet.qld.gov.au/Bills/55PDF/2015/NatureConOLAB15.pdf>)

The Bill includes a range of amendments to the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NCA) and related legislation to align the legislative framework with the government's commitments and priorities for the protected area estate. Amendments contained in the Bill will:

- reinstate 'the conservation of nature' as the sole object of the NCA
- reinstate the former national park (scientific), conservation park and resources reserve classes of protected area, and their associated management principles
- remove provisions that allow management plans under the NCA, *Marine Parks Act 2004* and *Recreation Areas Management Act 2006* to be amended without public consultation if the amendments relate to a change in State Government policy
- remove provisions that allowed the chief executive to grant stock grazing permits for emergency drought relief on six prescribed national parks until 31 December 2013 because they have become redundant
- revert rolling term leases (under the *Land Act 1994*) for agriculture, grazing or pastoral purposes back to term leases if they are within national parks (all classes), regional parks and forest reserves (noting that this will not affect rolling term leases for grazing on State Forests).

Protect the Bush Alliance appreciates the proposed amendments but considers more reform is required of the NCA if it is to meet the requirements of the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity and to prevent a continuing decline in biodiversity. If 'the conservation of nature' is the sole object of the NCA why does mining take priority over protection of areas of high conservation significance within Resource Reserves and gazetted Nature Refuges?¹ Indeed land holders hold safe Nature

¹ 27 Prohibition on mining, geothermal activities and GHG storage activities, NCA, pp.26-27

Refuges against any inimical conduct which may ever happen upon that land. There can be no activity more inimical than mining. We refer to Glen Innes Station, Bimblebox', as such a case in Queensland.

Mining is by its very nature is uniquely destructive of ecosystems which cannot be restored, so cannot meet the prime requirement for 'conservation of nature'. The NCA cannot be in compliance with the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which requires the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity as long as it contains Section 27 which allows mining in areas of high conservation value except National Parks. With eighty-five percent of Queensland covered by mining exploration tenures, mining will inevitably become the largest causal factor in irreversible whole scale damage to all of biodiversity over the landscapes involved. Offsets are not available or even capable of mitigating the extent of damage anticipated for particularly the Galilee Basin developments. We suggest the cumulative impacts of the CSG industry is very much under the radar in respect to negative impacts to biodiversity across the Surat and Bowen Basins.

PTBA supports the amendments to improve public participation in the management of our protected areas, thereby improving accountability and although we see ecotourism as invaluable and a potential source of income for protected areas, we feel section 35 of the NC Act should dismiss the concept of developments inside national parks boundaries. In this respect a return to the alignment of the classes of the protected areas to the IUCN classifications should be met. We welcome a return to wilderness areas, World Heritage management areas and international agreement areas.

Thank you for this opportunity to make a submission on The Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015

Yours sincerely



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