

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Agriculture and Environment Committee](#)
Subject: Submission on the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015-from Wildlife
Queensland Gold Coast & Hinterland Branch
Date: Monday, 30 November 2015 4:49:49 PM

30th November 2015

The Chair
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House, Brisbane Qld 4000
aec@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: The Nature Conservation and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015

Wildlife Queensland, Gold Coast and Hinterland Branch, congratulates the Government on their intention to rectify the gravely damaging changes which we are on public record as condemning as abrogating the duty of care expected of responsible Governance. (Please refer to our prior submission sent in September 2013 placing these concerns on public record for the information of the legislators and for the information of any future Inquiry or Investigative Commission-A copy will be sent for Reference to the above email).

Our Branch of the Statewide Organization, now custodians of the sixth largest and most biodiverse City in Australia, has been established for more than half a century.

We congratulate and support the Government in the proposal to re-instate the Conservation of Nature as the sole object of the Act. This is critical, essential and would restore to National Parks their true function, status and indeed their right under the name of National Parks. Agriculture occupies sixty percent of Australia's land area, the Reserve System 13 percent, of which only 8 percent is National Park. It is an obvious but astonishingly often overlooked fact that these natural systems cannot be recreated and that, outside National Park boundaries, they are disappearing. In Queensland, as elsewhere, this future protecting principle must apply. Even within this framework 80 percent of Queensland's ecosystems and seventy-two percent of its wildlife lack minimum standards of protection. (Wildlife Australia- Autumn Edition 2013 quoting Taylor, M et al, Building Nature's Safety Net, 2011, WWF Australia)

The unsubstantiated, retrograde, unjustifiable and, indeed, shockingly ignorant changes of 2013, betrayed the work of Romeo Lahey, pioneer of National Park preservation Queensland and betrayed the work of successive generations of legislators, scientifically informed public servants and academics as well as community and advisory non-government organizations. Prior to this the National Park Estate, although still inadequate, had risen from less than one percent of the State during the Bjelke-Petersen era, to five percent, still inadequate but, importantly, modelled on, and reflecting International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Protective Principle Enshrining Designations. **Therefore we congratulate the Government on its intent to further the spirit of best current practice by re-instating the categories of National Park (scientific), conservation park and resources reserve and we urge them to further this course by removing the special management area Principles of National Parks in Section 17 of the Nature conservation Act (by re-instating National Park- Recovery- or by re-designating all those areas as Conservation Park), thus furthering the Election Commitment and Public Duty to re-instate the Cardinal Principle.**

Further to this we request, in the spirit of the best practice, future oriented, intergenerational responsibility and natural heritage survival guardianship involved in re-instating Legislation so destructively dismantled, that other classes of protected areas that were abolished should be re-instated, namely Wilderness Area, World Heritage management Area, International Agreement Area and Co-ordinated Conservation area. The attributes of these areas are intrinsic in maintaining the range of protected areas reflecting the global categories of the IUCN.

Tourism facilities should be placed outside/adjacent to National Parks. Such usage will benefit and economically enhance Local Communities, if such exist and are in keeping with the principle that any entrepreneur should not degrade/ exploit a publicly owned/ purchased/ acquired site but must, if they intend to sustainably co-exist/interact, be responsible for procuring their site/facility, in the same way that all other businesses and entrepreneurs are required to do. Public/ private partnerships do not apply in the case of the the Heritage Estate as it exists, irreplaceable, non replicable, still, tragically, under represented and challenged by climatic factors and the attrition of supporting and co-existing natural systems.

**We understand the challenges facing Good Governance and we thank the Legislators for their current and future attempt to repair and re-instate this pivotal Legislation,
Yours faithfully Sally Spain Pres Wildlife Q GC& H [REDACTED]**

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Agriculture and Environment Committee](#)
Subject: Fwd: Submission to the Nature Conservation & Other Legislation Amendment Bill from Wildlife Queensland, Gold Coast & Hinterland Branch September 13 2013
Date: Monday, 30 November 2015 4:55:24 PM

COPY-FORMER 201S SUBMISSION FROM WILDLIFE QUEENSLAND RE THE NEWMAN GOVT CHANGES OR THE NATURE CONSERVATION ACT- NOW SENT AS AN ADDENDUM AND TO WILDLIFE QUEENSLAND GOLD COAST AND HINTERLAND SUBMISSION TO THE CURRENT PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE NATURE CONSERVATION ACT

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Sally Spain <[s\[REDACTED\]](#)>
Date: Fri, Sep 13, 2013 at 11:41 PM
Subject: Submission to the Nature Conservation & Other Legislation Amendment Bill from Wildlife Queensland, Gold Coast & Hinterland Branch September 13 2013
To: hpsc@parliament.qld.gov.au

To The Chairman
Health & Community Services
Parliament House
Queensland

From Wildlife Queensland
Gold Coast & Hinterland Branch
[REDACTED]

September 13 2013

per Sally Spain
President WQ, GC&H

5 Theses

1 This document is to place on open public record, for current and future witness, the grave condemnation by this Organization, established half a century ago, in what is now the sixth largest and most biodiverse City in Australia, of the content and direction of the legislative proposals in the sphere of Nature Conservation, which are submitted by this State Government for public comment.

It is shocking to us, a Group founded by such iconic and internationally respected Queenslanders as Judith Wright and the Fleays, to be re addressing the exploitative, unsustainable simple mindedness which first ignited our Statewide Organization into advocacy 50 years ago, with proposals for oil drilling on the Great Barrier Reef.

2 We would direct any future Inquiry or investigative interests or Commissions to note that among the list of Consultative Groups invited to participate, by this Government, re proposed amendments to the Nature Conservation Act, were included the Urban Development Institute Australia, AgForce, Property Council of Australia, Timber Queensland, Origin Energy, Bundaberg Fruit & Vegetable Growers, Australian Petroleum Products & Exploration Association (non attendee), four Tourism Interest Groups, Q'ld

Resources Council, HQ Plantations Pty. Ltd., Cement & Concrete Aggregates Australia and Q'ld Gas Company.

The fact that

a) the Proposed Bill specifically would "broaden the objectives of the Nature Conservation Act to provide for recreational and commercial uses in **protected** areas, while continuing to retain a **focus** on nature conservation'(emphasis added) and that b) the briefings were given confidentially to Groups "on amendments **relevant to their interest'** (emphasis added) and the nature of the composition of the Consultative agencies renders the claim "**no significant issues were raised by the stake holder groups** on the majority of amendments" disingenuous, at best, and worthy of urgent scrutiny and reversal. It also, self evidently, reveals a garvelly flawed process and agenda.

3 Actual on the record reservations,- as those whose attention has been arrested by this extraordinary process or, rather, this charade of the procedures of governance, will undoubtedly note,. came from volunteer Conservation Associations, who had no potential financial vested interest and a constitutional imperative to protect natural areas.

"Conservation Groups raised concerns around the broadening of the object of the Nature Conservation Act and its potential to impact on the cardinal principle of National Park management. "

The extraordinary refutation of this very justifiable concern must be cited here, for future generations, as evidence of the absence of the custodial care of heritage and the obligation of sustainability which is the duty of legitimate Government. To be clear, the guardianship of irreplaceable public assets does not involve opening a one stop shop with "streamlined" access. and abrogating covenants on the scientific watch and monitoring of our non replicable systems.

Below is the "remarkable" refutation of these attested concerns, on behalf of the State Government, the same State Government which brought grazing into National Parks (and fencing to suit)

"Therefore the inclusion of **themes** (emphasis mine) associated with commercial and recreational use of **protected** (emphasis mine) areas, as an outcome of the Nature Conservation Act as a whole, is considered appropriate"

The astonishing conclusion after this remarkable statement is that "the cardinal principle of National Park management will not be amended under this Bill." No evidence is provided as to how this impossible dualistic feat may occur, wherein one set of priorities potentially contradicts the existence of the other.

Pre- legislative evidential justification, we are now on public record as testifying, has been abandoned to a mere amateurish statement of intent, contradictory at best and culpable in reality.

4 Current concerned commentators and critics of this short sighted attempt at legislative proposals and those appalled at this morally impoverished guardianship and governance-- and future generations-- will note that "the majority of stake holders" (many consulted who had, possibly, potential profit to be gained) "supported proposed amendments for **streamlining and resource efficiencies**" (emphasis mine).

It is stated that "Recommendations from Conservation and National Park Groups consulted suggested the need to take a Bioregional approach to management planning. While it is asserted this feedback has been considered (?), the general public, who pay the salaries of our legislators, are supplied with the following facile response. "This approach represents a significant deviation from the current management framework for **protected** areas and

has not been considered appropriate at this time."

Urgently note, **at this time**, the fact is, that, of Queensland's 1375 terrestrial regional ecosystems, 561 are classified as "of concern" and 222 as endangered. Instead of abrogating the duty to immediately set aside recreational Central parks in less botanically valuable natural areas while they still exist (70% of our natural habitat in the eastern and south eastern parts of Queensland has been lost because of clearing.).

Instead of allowing invasive activity and profit orientated activity in the in publicly funded assets that are our National Parks, which are the plant and fauna preservation Arks of the future, this Government should be acquiring more National park and Conservation estate, while the natural resource still exists

This seems a much more important Governance agenda than "streamlining" in more pressures on our already stretched and stressed natural systems, in a Nation that has the highest mammalian extinction rate in the World

This seems more important than doing away with the "red tape," which is often the thin red line of expert surveillance, which saves from neglect, careless usage, inadequate protection, hasty and irreparable loss or wholesale destruction This kind of Governance which sheds duty of care and the principles of intergenerational equity is easily replaceable with no governance at all.

It seems the "current management framework" is to have the Minister, (who is, somewhat oddly, dividing his time not with the environment portfolio but with other more unusual portfolios not generally considered, in modern governance to particularly related to his sphere of influence), announce on a website, a "fait accompli" statement of his "management," conclusions, hatched without public consultation or knowledge..Justification for this unique arrangement, a sleight of hand avoidance of the community right of input or information, seems to hinge vaguely on the truism that we live in a technological era.

Deviation from this "banana republic" set up, at a time when the natural systems of the planet are, as universally, scientifically attested, undergoing a crisis of extinction, might allow for a "bioregional approach" suggested by those supposedly consulted.

Victoria, which early suffered and open slather of wholesale clearing and now has little or nothing left, according to its National Parks Association, that has the status to be acquired into its approximately 17 % of protected estate.

Queensland has, at this moment in its history, as cited above, much that urgently needs acquisition and it is this "management framework" that the Government should be using its taxpayer funded public servants and resources to address. this.

5 Queenslanders and, indeed, Australians (as Commonwealth money substantially helps fund National Park acquisitions) note that ' "these **reforms** are in response to the State Government's commitment to extend access to National Parks" (**already accessible to those who move through their rare peaceful precincts without disturbing their precious cargo on a continent that has lost 90% of its tree cover in two hundred years**).

It is to be noted that in the last twenty years (with the exception of the Borbidge Governmen, it has been the successive Labor Governments which, finally, grew the Queensland National Park and Conservation estate from the shameful less than one percent of National Park set aside in the protracted backwoods backwater of the Bjelke

Petersen era to the five percent which is still the lowest in Australia.

This public asset, which the LNP had almost nothing to do with gaining, is now proposed to be "streamlined" to commercially exploited, substituted recreational Central parks. Real recreational Central parks should be established but not with the downgrading of the status of the conservation estate. Separate Regional area parks should be purchased as they originally were under the SSEQ 2001 plan, especially in areas such as South east Queensland with its large incoming population with higher impact recreational needs than walking/ hiking the designated tracks of our National Parks.

Queensland has 72% of Australia's bird species and 85% of Australia's mammals. This legislative concentration on proposals to allow recreational usage, which should be placed in areas acquired outside the National Park storehouses for vulnerable and irreplaceable systems, is culpable. Culpable also is this legislative concentration on the proposed "open doors" for commercial intrusion and exclusive rights.

This State has been belated and remiss in National Park enshrinement. It still has the lowest amount of protected estate. It has over 100 plants and nearly 300 animals classified as endangered, vulnerable or near threatened. It must have a proactive and vigorous National Park increase and enshrinement of status and this should be the focus of our legislators and the enabling duty to which it directs our executive..

Postscript

Recently a Grade 7 student, whose class I was supervising for a day, showed me his draft letter to a future student in 2063. He said life in 2013 was terrible to him, with animals going extinct and trees getting cut down and houses getting built on forests. He said he was saddened but there was nothing that could be done and he felt powerless to help. His reason was that no-one could challenge the Government and win.

His perception of his Government was not an institution that guarded his heritage or ameliorated the destruction of the vanishing natural world. It was an instrument that made no effort to prevent and rather enabled the tide of ongoing loss.

It had not occurred to him that this was an indictment.