

# *Coast and Country*

30 November 2015

Agriculture and Environment Committee  
Parliament House  
Brisbane QLD 4000

By email only: [aec@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:aec@parliament.qld.gov.au)

## **RE: Submission to the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. On behalf of Coast and Country I would like to thank the Honourable Dr Stephen Miles MP, Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef for introduction of this Bill to the Queensland Parliament.

The following three points below outline Coast and Country's support for the proposed Bill and provides key recommendations that improve upon the amendments and mechanisms to offset implementation.

### Classes of National Park

Coast and Country welcomes the reincorporation of national parks, scientific class through the Amendment of s14<sup>1</sup>. Other than those reasons outlined in the explanatory notes<sup>2</sup> and its parliamentary introduction speech to "restore the higher level of protection afforded to national parks (scientific)", further investment is required to ensure delivery of the new s16 outlining the Management Principles of National Parks (scientific). This class of national park is vital to science, both for the protection of endangered animals such as the Northern Hairy Nosed Wombat, but also to maintain areas for research that can assist future agricultural and medical discovery.

Additional requirements should be included within s16 - Management Principles of National Parks (scientific) – to ensure the 'threatening processes' external to the area are managed.

Recommendation - insertion of (4) in s16:

- (4) If threatened wildlife and flora is a significant natural value for the area, management of the surrounding region of the area may include—
  - (a) manipulation of the threatening thing; and
  - (b) the control of threatening processes relating to the wildlife and flora, including threatening processes caused by development, and pests.

Along with amendment of s14 and s16, further investment is required in Queensland's scientific national parks. The Epping Forest National Park, located in Central Queensland is the natural home of the Northern Hairy Nosed Wombat. This tiny national park and the wombat are under

1 Minister Miles, *Queensland Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015*, n/a, 7, <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/Bills/55PDF/2015/NatureConOLAB15.pdf>.

2 EHP, 'Explanatory Notes - Queensland Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015' (State of Queensland, n/a), 3–4, <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/Bills/55PDF/2015/NatureConOLAB15.pdf>.

considerable pressure from regional development orientated impacts<sup>3</sup>, such as: pests and invasive grasses, the threat of fire, and surrounding habitat reduction.

### Special management area

Coast and Country is concerned with the limited Amendment of s17 (Management Principles of National Parks). Removal of the existing (1A)(b)<sup>4</sup> from the Nature Conservation Act 1992 to protect scientific national parks is welcomed. Also to the omission of s 42C (Declaration of resource use area). However, the limited scope of the change enables private enterprise to benefit from state investment and reduce the public benefit.

Private enterprise, be it ecotourism or industrial development is enabled through existing legislation to commercialise both freehold and leasehold lands. For example, ecotourism operations can develop immediately adjacent to protected areas and develop their nature products through protected area access. Similarly, industrial operators, that includes mineral, oil and gas operators can easily work outside of the protected area as a foundation of the business's feasibility.

Coast and Country supports amendments to s70AA (Regulations may define extent of area). However the amendment could extend to omit s70AA(2)<sup>5</sup> as it stands within the Act in force. Protection of an areas natural values are for the benefit of the area and the natural things within it, and for the things society derives from these values, be it economic, spiritual, health, bio products, clean water, etc. These areas require the fullest connectivity to healthy water, including groundwater, and its airshed.

Recommendation – removal of the existing s17(1)(e)<sup>6</sup> as this disingenuously provides for the use of a special management area to support development of private enterprise.

The existing s17(4)<sup>7</sup>, s27(2)<sup>8</sup> and s70AA(2) should be omitted from the Act. By doing so the State will ensure the full intent of the Act, and the protection it affords is removed from risk through commercial and industrial enterprise. A protected area is no place for development interests, be it resource extraction, transport and other such facilities.

### Rolling term lease and Permit for grazing stock

In its total, Coast and Country supports the omission of s 173S (Permit for grazing stock in particular protected areas for emergency drought relief). Support is also given to amendment of s164 (What is a rolling term lease), with particular reference to the insertion of s164(b)(iii) that clarifies the public interest and benefit through protection of nature conservation areas and specified national parks.

Recommendation - In response and support for the need of pastoralist and an extended flora and fauna safety net, ongoing maintenance and investment in the Queensland Stock Route Network is required. For the dry, and the encroaching impact from Climate Change, there is a strong need to invest in maintenance of stock routes. In many areas stock routes remain in their natural state providing habitat and valued ecological resource. During drought access to stock routes by

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3 Department of Environment and Resource Management, 'Epping Forest National Park (Scientific) Management Plan 2011' (State of Queensland, 2011), 6, <http://www.nprsr.qld.gov.au/managing/plans-strategies/pdf/mp050-epping-forest-np-mgtplan-approved.pdf>.

4 State of Queensland, *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, 2015, 23, <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/legisln/current/n/naturecona92.pdf>.

5 State of Queensland, *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, 2015, 74, <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/legisln/current/n/naturecona92.pdf>.

6 State of Queensland, *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, 2015, 24, <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/legisln/current/n/naturecona92.pdf>.

7 State of Queensland, *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, 24.

8 Ibid., 27.

pastoralist is critical to alleviate financial pressure. At these times access to grass and maintained watering points is crucial. Strong investment in stock route maintenance, and clear access processes will offset the changes enacted in insertion of s173S, and primarily to the amendment of s164 of the Land Act.

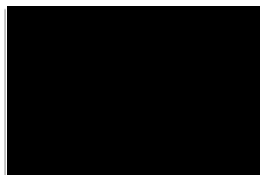
### Transitional Arrangements

Finally, Coast and Country draws attention to the Honourable Minister Miles aspirations<sup>9</sup> for the expansion of Queensland protected area estate, and the recent Currawinya National Park extension. The Bill through insertion of pt 12, div 6, hdg (Transitional provision for Environmental Offsets Act 2014), includes the section 209 Regional park (resource use area) taken to be resources reserve. This section seeks to convert all existing Regional parks (resource use area)<sup>10</sup>, that is, areas that are of exceptional environmental value, to areas that are threatened by development as resource reserves. This Bill provides an opportunity for the Minister to transition many existing Regional park (resource use area) to national parks. Between June and October 2015 a cluster of Moratorium Areas for Minerals<sup>11</sup> was removed from the extended Currawinya National Park area, however the Regional park (resource use area) status remains.

Recommendation – through insertion and further subsection development of s209, transition the many Regional parks (resource use area) to national park. A simple example being the transition of Lots 2 to 7 on AP19376 on Currawinya to national park.

For further comment please don't hesitate to contact me at the details below.

Sincerely,



Derec Davies  
On behalf of Rural Services of Coast and Country

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9 'First Batch of National Park Declarations since 2012 - The Queensland Cabinet and Ministerial Directory', 15 June 2015, <http://statements.qld.gov.au/Statement/2015/6/15/first-batch-of-national-park-declarations-since-2012>.

10 State of Queensland, *Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Regulation 1994*, 2015, 59, <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/legisln/current/n/naturecona92.pdf>.

11 State of Queensland, 'Queensland Spatial Catalogue : Queensland Government', *Exploration and Production Permits - Queensland*, 7 October 2015, <http://qldspatial.information.qld.gov.au/catalogue/custom/detail.page?fid={B0D192C5-4076-43E8-9A2C-94A0FA928AF9}>.