



PUBLIC SUBMISSION TO AEC ON Nature Conservation (Special Wildlife Reserves) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017

10/07/2017

Dear Committee Members,

WBBEC is a community based NFP regional group funded by the DEHP to advocate on environmental issues concerning the Widebay Burnett Region.

WBBEC fundamentally supports the policy objectives of the draft Bill with the following caveats.

- **SPECIAL WILDLIFE RESERVES**

The bill should allow for all areas of freehold land which contain MSES (Matters of State Environmental Significance) to be eligible, regardless of the size of the Lot.

COASTAL EXAMPLE

IE ; Some areas of freehold land within the urban landscape contain Endangered Regional Ecosystem 12.2.2 best described as;

“Microphyll/notophyll vine forest. Characteristic species include Cupaniopsis anacardioides, Acronychia imperforata, Flindersia schottiana, Alectryon coriaceus, Elaeocarpus obovatus, Polyalthia nitidissima, Diospyros spp., Pleiogynium timorense and Mallotus discolor. Melaleuca spp. and eucalypt emergents may be present, e.g. Melaleuca dealbata and Corymbia tessellaris. Occurs on Quaternary coastal dunes and beaches. (BVG1M: 3a)”

The Environmental *Offsets Bill 2014 QLD*, allows for this MNES to be;

- Financially offset (developed for a cost of ca \$126k /ha)
- Physically offset (developed by legally securing 4 ha (4:1 ratio)

INLAND EXAMPLE

Some farmers have areas of habitat for the MSES *Phascolarctos cinereus seq* (Koala) , which can be offset for ca \$126/ha.

DISCUSSION

If the key policy objective of the *NCSWROLA* is to create ‘privately managed protected areas’, then Landowners need to be encouraged to protect the MSES which underpins the classification of their land.

Whilst the intent of the *QOB 2014* is to allow for development to proceed by removal of the littoral vine forest/Koala habitat , it does not have the flexibility for landowners to be encouraged and or

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offered incentives for the conversion of the MSES to 'Special Wildlife Reserve' / 'Private Protected Areas'.

The Queensland Financial Offsets calculator (QFOC)¹ indicates that the Financial offsets payment for 1 ha of RE 12.2.2/Koala habitat is ca \$126k, and this is an impost (biodiversity tax) on a landowner who may wish to have the option of protecting the MSES as opposed to being penalised for wanting to offset the MSES values.

The QFOC in essence is the 'Valuer General', for MSES within the state of Queensland.

It dictates the economic value of the MSES.

It therefore sets the benchmark for what the crown considers to be the economic value of biodiversity and hence the per hectare value of 'Special Wildlife reserves' (SWR) or 'Private Protected Areas' (PPA).

The *QOB 2014* intent is to place an economic value on MSES which results in the removal of the MSES from its existential site.

This is a disincentive for attempting to encourage landowners to create SWR /PPA.

Landowners will only consider allowing their freehold land to be utilised as SWR/PPA if they incur minimal cost by doing so.

CONCLUSION

SWR/PPA management will create costs for the landowner who attempts to manage their MSES in situ, therefore an incentives programme must underpin the intent of the Bill.

The Bill must contain a clause clearly indicating that WSR/PPA will be eligible for crown funding.

This funding programme should be based on 'financial offsets calculation equivalency' on a per hectare basis.

If a SWR/PPA can demonstrate that the MSES is in existence in situ, then the landowner should be eligible for applying for crown funding at the per hectare Financial Offsets Calculations as indicated below , in figures 1-4 below , which calculates the financial offset cost for 1 ha of MSES RE 12.2.2/Koala habitat.

IE a landowner who wishes to protect the MSES on their land, should be offered a grant for \$126k to fund correct ongoing management of the 1 ha of MSES.

The costs for creation of the administrative and legal securement (covenant on title) of the SWR/PPA should be borne by the crown.

This crown expense should be made available from the Queensland Biodiversity Offsets Management Fund.

¹ <https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/offsets-calculator/?calculate=financial>



To consider attempting to create a Bill to allow landholders to commit their freehold title land use for protected area management, would be folly if the crown does not commit to serious funding to incentivize and encourage landowners to embrace private conservation management.

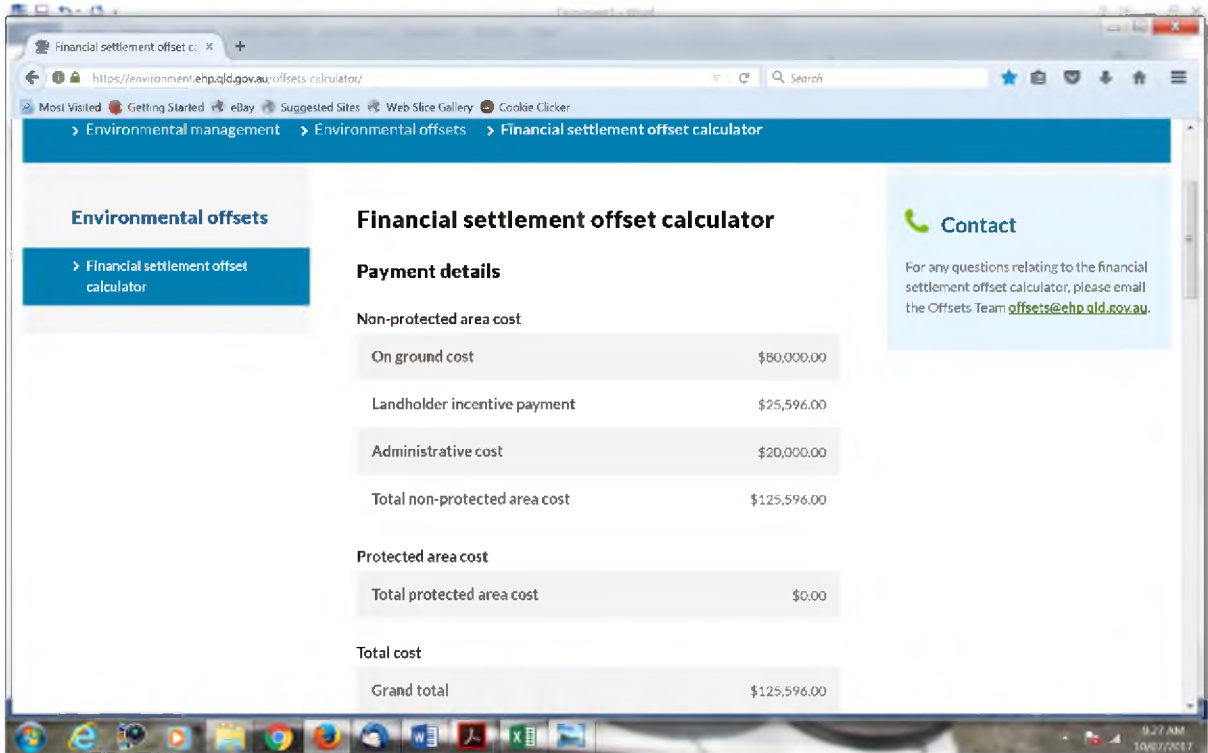


Figure 1, Queensland Financial Offsets Calculator website.

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The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL 'https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/offsets/calculator/'. The page content is as follows:

Total cost

Grand total	\$125,596.00
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Total offset area: 4 ha

Section 1

LGA
Fraser Coast Regional Council

Bioregion
Southeast Queensland

Subregion
Burnett - Curtis Coastal Lowlands

Impact area
1 ha

Notional offset area
4 ha

Distinct matter area 1.1

Impact area: 1 ha
Notional offset area: 4 ha

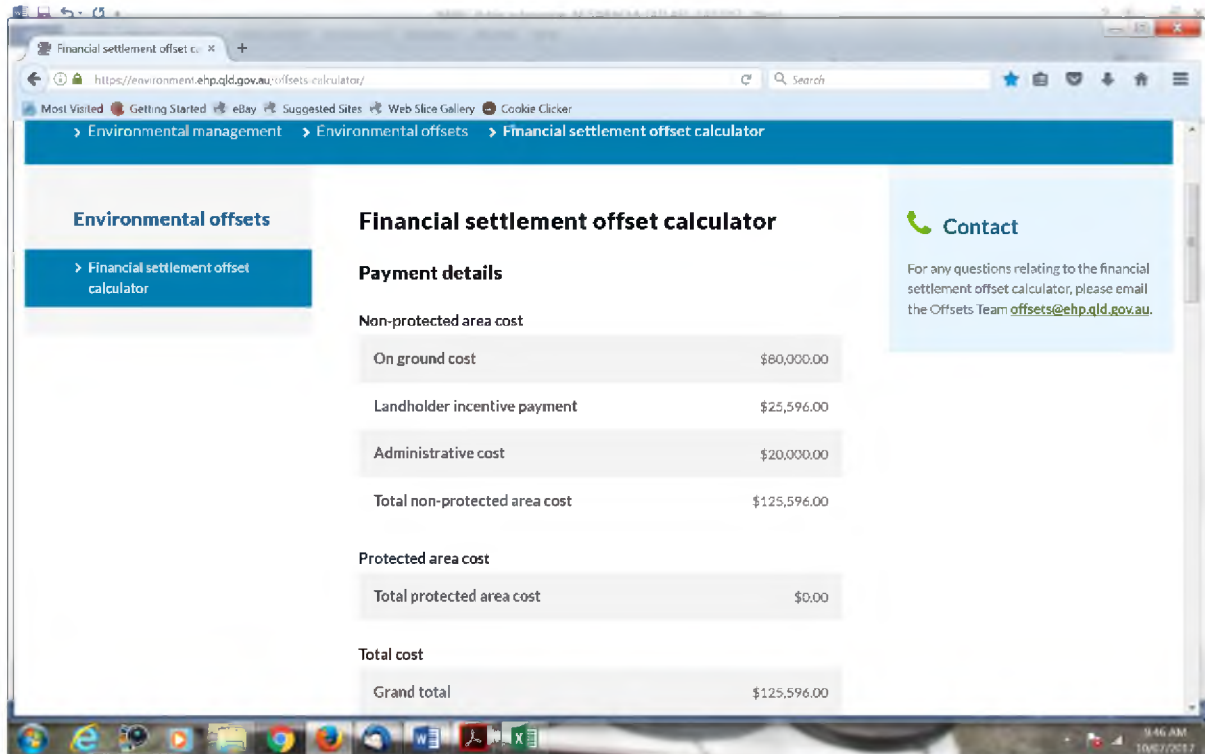
Matter groups:

- 1.1.1: Regional ecosystem—12.2.2 (Microphyll/notophyll vine forest on beach ridges)

Figure 2 RE description.

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Financial settlement offset calculator

Environmental management > Environmental offsets > Financial settlement offset calculator

Financial settlement offset calculator

Payment details

Non-protected area cost	
On ground cost	\$80,000.00
Landholder incentive payment	\$25,596.00
Administrative cost	\$20,000.00
Total non-protected area cost	\$125,596.00

Protected area cost	
Total protected area cost	\$0.00

Total cost	
Grand total	\$125,596.00

Contact
For any questions relating to the financial settlement offset calculator, please email the Offsets Team offsets@ehp.qld.gov.au.

Figure 3 FOC for *Phascolarctos cinereus* (koala).

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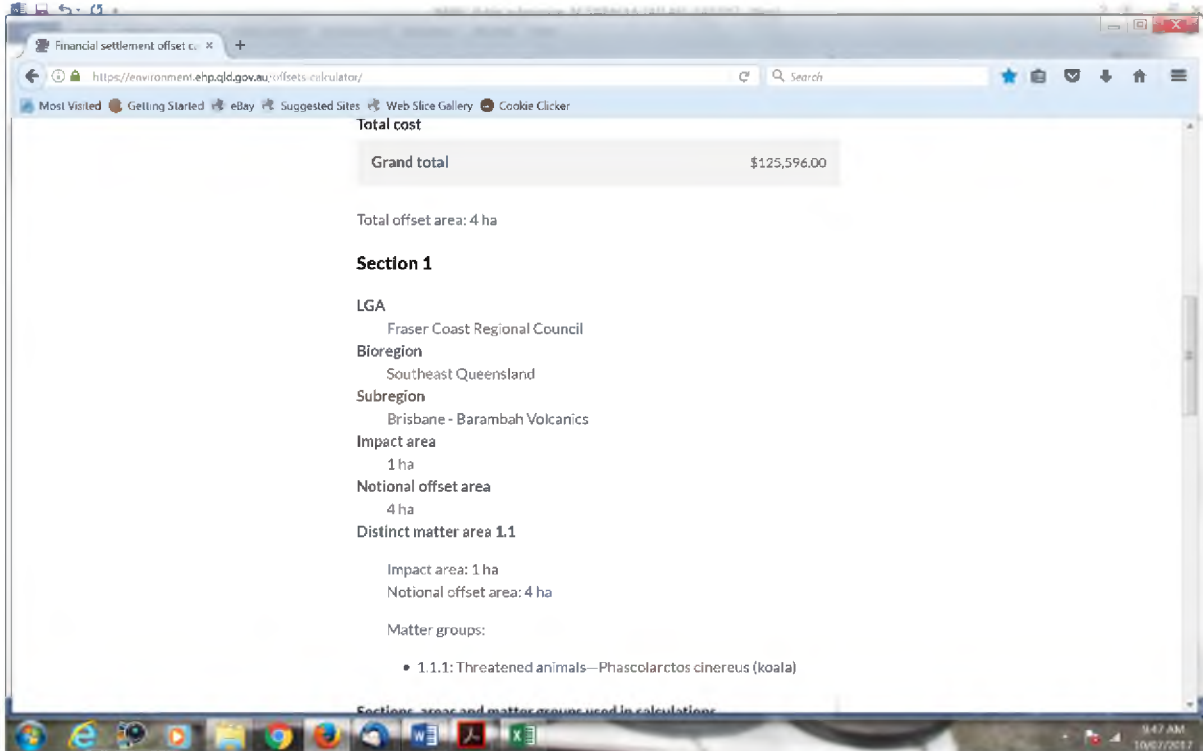


Figure 4 FOC for *Phascolarctos cinereus* (koala).

ROGER M CURRIE
PRESIDENT WBBEC
10/07/2017