

Sub# 13



7 December 2012

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The Director  
Health and Community Services Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE Q 4000



Dear Sir/Madam

RE NATURE CONSERVATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2012

The Association notes that this Bill was introduced by Hon Steven Dickson MP on 13 November 2012 and your committee is to report on the Bill by 7 February 2013. Your committee has invited submissions on the Bill. This submission is made on behalf of this Association.

Amongst other things, the Bill intends to enable authorisation of privately operated ecotourism facilities in national parks. In that respect the Association submits that people have always had access to national parks (except for National Parks being used for scientific purposes) and therefore the current position does not need to be changed.

However if, as it appears, the intended effect is to open up national parks for permanent commercial tourist infrastructure for long term leases and reduce potential control over state forests the Association strongly objects to the Bill as there is a potential for our Queensland's limited areas of national park to be exploited for other infrastructure attacking the primary purpose of national parks – the protection and conservation of our biodiversity.

As previously stated the public currently have access to National Parks with many have a right to camp or stay overnight. Therefore the Association can only assume that exclusivity is intended for the high paying guests and clients. It is difficult to imagine that for the privacy and comfort of those guests the rights of the public will not be restricted to such areas.

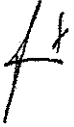
Currently National Parks play a significant role in the tourist industry. People engaged in nature-based tourism acquire land adjacent to or nearby the appropriate National Parks giving them access via permit. Why should land acquired for conservation and biodiversity purposes be given freely (or at minimum cost) without any restriction generally and particularly on the duration of any agreement or a requirement that a tender process be undertaken before any such agreement is entered into. The Association suggests that the duration of any agreement must be limited and must go to tender before being entered into.

It appears the suggested changes to the Nature Conservation Act are but a start to the watering down of the legislation allowing tenures are to be modified and the cardinal principle of management that has served adequately for over 50 years will be under attack.

In the opinion of the Association the very act of introducing these changes and removing national parks from the Environment portfolio shows a lack of understanding of the role of National Parks which in Queensland are of a limited area compared to the total area of the State.

The changes to the Forestry Act appear to do nothing but further fragment the forest with a potential loss of control. Vegetation will be modified with more threat to what remnant vegetation remains endangering habitat for our wildlife.

Yours faithfully



for Christine Tainsh Secretary to

FRIENDS  
OF LAKE  
WEYBA  INC