

**From:** [Cathie Duffy](#)  
**To:** [Health and Community Services Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Changes to the Nature Conservation Act 1992  
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## Health and Community Services Committee

To the Committee,

I write to you as an experienced bushwalker with over twenty years rambling in Queensland's wonderful National Parks. I have always understood that they are places deserving of the most secure protection both for their intrinsic value, and as places for passive non invasive recreation such as bushwalking.

The proposed changes will endanger both of these; the intrinsic value of the national parks, and their usefulness as areas of non invasive recreation.

Firstly; the primary object of the act has always been the conservation of nature. This is what safeguards National Parks' intrinsic value. To ensure the complexities of different parks are well managed, the class of 'scientific' parks has always been appreciated as places too special for the bushwalker to use for recreation. I have been rightly refused entry to such areas, as the species and landforms are more important than my right to walk there. As the dominant species, it is humans' responsibility to safeguard nature.

Secondly; the changes, if implemented, will foreground the objects of social, cultural and commercial uses. To try to make money from areas that benefit most by being left alone is just crass. There is some good in educating people about nature and allowing them to experience it, but operators who want to make money from ecolodges and ecotourism can do as well by basing themselves beside and outside National Parks. To exploit that which they seek to share lessens its value, by 'loving it to death'.

Thirdly; the needs of a national park in a 'recovery' class are different from other classes. These parks will in time be amongst our most valued. Dumbing down the various classes and managing them all as similar, tends to result in the lowest standards being applied to all, rather than fitting the management standard to appropriate park levels.

Fourthly; we need more national parks, and more protection of those that we have, not less. The forest reserves that are earmarked to become national parks should be allowed protection. Qld has less than 5% of its vast area put aside for conservation, less than most other Australian states. Surely, enough of this state is already being used for other purposes. We know it is good to protect what is natural, but we do not even know all the good that will come from national parks to future generations. Let not this administration be so short sighted that it will be known as the one that turned the tide away from conservation.

Fifthly; a democratic state such as ours should listen to the lowly bushwalker as keenly as to the biggest corporate operator. Public consultation should be sought about how a national park should be managed, before a management statement can be said to be legitimate.

For all these reasons, I submit that the proposed changes to the Nature Conservation Act 1992 should be reconsidered or dropped altogether.

From  
Cathryn Duffy Masters

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