



13 September 2013

The Chair
Health and Community Services Committee
Parliament House
Brisbane QLD 4000
hpsc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Health and Community Services Committee

The Wilderness Society wishes to make the following very brief submission to the Inquiry into the *Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2013*.

The Wilderness Society is alarmed to see a proposal to alter the purpose of the Nature Conservation Act, from “the conservation of nature” to encompass “social, cultural and commercial use of protected areas”. While we are strongly supportive of people having the opportunity to experience nature, and to visit and enjoy national parks, the purpose of national parks and the states protected area estate must primary be framed around the protection of nature – biodiversity, landscapes and ecological processes – which in turn makes our planet one hospitable to human existence. We completely oppose the Newman Government’s agenda of downgrading of nature protection through this Bill.

As one of the signatories to the South East Queensland Forest Agreement (SEQFA), the Wilderness Society is also alarmed at the proposal to abolish the forest reserve tenure introduced as part of the SEQFA process. These reserves were intended to be a holding tenure for State forest land destined to become national park, but contained a number of encumbrances that had to be negotiated before the land could become a protected area. The undermining of the SEQFA has ramifications for nature and for the timber industry, as it may well lead to a return to more adversarial campaigning activities in certain forest and other areas.

There are many other concerns that the Wilderness Society has with this Bill, and we defer to the submissions from the National Parks Association of Queensland and the Wildlife Preservation Society for analysis and critique of an array of other issues with the proposals. We encourage the Committee to consider those two submissions in detail.

Should you wish to discuss any issues contained in this brief submission, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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