

**The Chairman**  
**Health and Community Services Committee,**  
**Parliament House**  
**George Street, Brisbane QLD 4000 13 September 2013**  
**hsc@parliament.qld.gov.au**  
**Re: Submission to the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Bill No (2) 2013**

I wish to lodge the following Submission in objection to the changes to the principals which govern National Parks. I am gravely concerned for the survival of the natural systems and the flora and fauna currently protected under our National Parks should these proposed changes occur.

We need to strengthen, not weaken public and government perceptions regarding the importance of National Parks.

This Bill's objectives which will permit the commercial, cultural and recreational use of National Parks and other public lands which damage the fragility and natural beauty of our National Parks.

Barbed wire entrapment of many native species is an ongoing, cruel and often deadly problem in all areas and to allow this to also occur in National Parks, putting our already threatened animals at higher risk is not acceptable – when it could very simply be avoided.

The proposed amendment will no longer support the Object of the Act where it will no longer be concerned with the conservation of nature, and instead have social, cultural and commercial use of protected areas. This may look harmless at face value, however, the object of an Act is the first resource in a court of law and is likely prone to mis-interpretation.

Statements have been made that the amendments leave the cardinal principle for national park management untouched. By changing the Object, the cardinal principle has potentially lost much of its legal strength. It has been the foundation for the protection, to the greatest possible extent, of the natural and cultural resources on national parks. It relied on the Object for its mandate.\

The amendments to the Object of the Act should be removed. It is clearly an attack on national parks, because the three proposed additions only refer to protected areas, when the Act also contains provisions relating to the conservation of wildlife outside protected areas. These proposed changes have no place in the Object. By placing them in the Object in such a broad and unqualified manner changes the whole basis of the Act.

*The proposed abolition of 8 classes of protected area is a step too far with minimal gain and some potentially substantial losses. It is fair comment that no areas had been declared as wilderness areas, World Heritage management areas and international agreement areas. So nothing changes by abolishing them. However, nothing is gained either. WHMAs and IGAs could have a place in the future and, in fact, were considered for declaration in the past. Why remove that flexibility when its presence has absolutely no effect, financially or in terms of so-called green tape, on the management of protected areas?*

Communities have long fought for the preservation of Queensland's National Parks and protected public areas. Such is the case with the Lamington National Park where Romeo Lahey stated, "*The Reserves should be set apart forever for the use and benefit for our people as a whole and not sacrificed to the short-sighted greed of a few.*" This statement was included in a letter written to the Qld Lands Minister in 1955 and it was accompanied by a petition that was signed by more than 500 local residents. As a result, this area was declared Lamington National Park.

Conservation parks and resources reserves have been abolished and rolled into a new class of protected area known as regional parks. The name should be objected to as it carries no implication of resource protection. When you combine two classes of protected area in a hierarchy, the resulting management principles tend to shift towards the lowest common denominator. That has happened with regional parks.

Management plans are required to go through a public consultation process. That process previously had two consultation steps, but has now been reduced to one. Management statements involve no consultation with the public prior to coming into force. It is important that some public feedback be facilitated. If that does not happen, then it's difficult to know what value the management statement actually has.

The only place wildlife have left to survive when development and demands on land in general is our National Parks.

Our environment in particular our National Parks are sacred grounds and therefore any changes to laws which so far has protected them from commercial use is an insult to the intelligence of the people of Qld and an abuse of power by the State Government especially to our indigenous communities.

I wish to again, express my objections to this proposal and implore that common sense prevails and that all steps are taken to ensure continued protection of our valuable and delicate ecosystems by protection our national parks.

Yours sincerely  
Connie Kerr

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