



Chris **Tallentire** MLA

Shadow Minister for Environment:  
Climate Change: Lands

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Tuesday, 3 December 2013

## **Barnett's weak stance on land clearing will destroy native vegetation**

### Fast Facts:

- Proposed changes to land clearing laws will increase the area of native vegetation that can be destroyed by landholders, without any control, from 1ha to 5ha per year
- Clearing native vegetation has been the major destroyer of biodiversity in the south-west and agricultural regions of WA
- WA is currently spending millions, possibly billions of dollars on repair works as a result of previous land clearing in the Wheatbelt and the South West
- From July 2008 to June 2013 the Government authorised the destruction of 91,220 hectares (Question on Notice No. 1234)
- The Barnett Government has made no effort to quantify the area cleared through exemptions from the clearing permit system

**The Barnett Government's decision to weaken WA's land clearing laws will allow further destruction of the State's native vegetation.**

Shadow Environment Minister Chris Tallentire said the Barnett Government's changes will increase the area of native vegetation that can be destroyed by landholders, without any control, from 1ha to 5ha per year. Given there's conservatively 4,500 farming business in WA,

this means an extra 18,000ha can be cleared each year.

“The Barnett Government simply does not care about how much damage this decision will cause,” Mr Tallentire said.

“The State’s land clearing laws are there for a reason – to protect native vegetation.

“This is a poor decision for Western Australia’s biodiversity and will almost certainly lead to an accelerated destruction of native vegetation, loss of declared and rare plant species and loss of habitat for endangered native animals.

“According to the Department of Agriculture’s “Report card on sustainable natural resource use in agriculture” (2013), WA farmers already forgo \$344m every year from land lost to salinity, with up to 4.5 million hectares of productive agricultural land currently under threat.

“The Government needs to ask itself if it is willing to pay this price just to reduce the regulatory burden for farmers.

“We’ve known for many years about the risks and damage caused by land clearing. It has been the major cause of land degradation in WA.

“We already have millions, if not billions of dollars of repair work to undertake as a result of land clearing in the Wheatbelt and South West.

“That bill will have to be repaid by future generations of Western Australians so we can continue to have a strong agricultural system.

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**Media contact: Chris Tallentire**

**CHRIS TALLENTIRE MLA  
SHADOW MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT; CLIMATE  
CHANGE; LANDS**