

Northern Grampians
Shire Council

31 July, 2003

Native Vegetation Inquiry
Productivity Commission
LB2 Collins St East
MELBOURNE VIC 8003

Dear Lisa

**IMPACTS OF NATIVE VEGETATION & BIODIVERSITY
REGULATIONS**

The scope of the Inquiry does not include public safety except in:

e) The adequacy of assessments of social impacts of decisions made under the above regulatory regimes.

The Shire has 2913 kms of local roads. Half of our roadsides have significant amounts of Native trees. The majority of deaths and injuries on the roadside are single car accidents normally involving a sudden stop against a tree. This Council has many instances where trees are within what may be considered a clear zone for traffic, which is in my opinion 2 metres behind the table drain. Council needs a planning permit to remove trees greater than 10 years old within this area and when it is referred to relevant agencies the impacts of the Native Vegetation and Biodiversity Regulations come into play with various recipes for replacement trees.

A road purpose is primary for public traffic and for another level of government to put restrictions on public safety through environmental controls is not acceptable. Alternatively the roads budget is funding nett gain at the detriment to road safety. The State and Commonwealth Government is sending out mixed messages which includes Black Spot funding but then takes native vegetation controls too far.

Council respectfully submits that a reasonable width of road reserve is required for public traffic for the speed restriction applicable and road safety within that width is more important than nett gain.

Further on isolated roads/tracks farm equipment need a clear template of 8 metres wide x 6 metres high to move around their equipment. The CFA template is 6 metres wide x 6 metres high for fire access.

We only ask that public safety be given more relevance.

Yours faithfully

ROD COOPER
DIRECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES