

**Native Vegetation Inquiry
Productivity Commission
LB2 Collins St East
Melbourne Vic 8003**

**Colin Sagar for the
Environment Network
32 Church St, Bega 2550 N8W**

Dear Sir, please accept this as a public submission to the inquiry.

The recent approach to land management in Australia (the last 200 years) has been based on an extraction model - mine the resource and move on. This has been coupled with an ideology that the individual title holder is at liberty to treat the land in any way he sees fit in order to extract a profit from the land. This regardless of adverse environmental impacts and to the exclusion of any broader community responsibility.

This approach to land management in Australia has been an environmental disaster and is obsolete.

Community and Government are now committed to Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD). This via the Intergovernment Agreement on the Environment 1992.

This agreement sets down the principles for ESD. They are

- the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity
- intergenerational equity
- improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms
- the precautionary principle

The protection of native vegetation is fundamental to ESD in Australia.

The cost of not protecting our native vegetation will include

- adverse impacts on soil and water conservation
- loss of biodiversity evolved over millions of years
- rapidly expanding desertification
- increased rate of "drying out" and climate change
- decreased fertility and agricultural productivity
- promotion of unsustainable agricultural practices
- loss of any credibility for Australians as custodians of the environment
- continued violation of the spiritual connection between people and the natural world of land, vegetation and animals.

There is a clear need and obligation for all levels of government, including this inquiry, to promote the legitimate and ecologically sustainable use and management of land in Australia.

The Environment Network have concerns with the limited number and scope of submissions to the inquiry and that some vested interest groups may see the inquiry as an opportunity to attack and undermine efforts by the broader community and government to reign in the excesses of land clearing of native vegetation and the promotion of ESD in Australia.

We therefore seek assurance that the inquiry will use every opportunity to ensure that the importance of maintaining and strengthening our native vegetation and biodiversity regulations in line with our ESD obligations is to the forefront of the inquiries hearings, deliberations and recommendations.

A representative of the Environment Network may be available to address the inquiry in person at the Sydney hearings.

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