



Lane Cove Bushland & Conservation Society Inc

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The Hon. Gabrielle Upton, MP
NSW Minister for the Environment
PO Box 5341
Sydney NSW 2001.

Dear Minister

The LCB&CS has been in existence for 47 years advocating for and protecting the environment of Lane Cove and have also engaged with wider conservation issues.

We opposed the Government's introduction of new land clearing laws and the subsequent regulations, as we believed it would result in greater land clearing which would have a detrimental effect on wildlife and its habitat. Our fears were confirmed by the release of the Government's own advice to the Environment Minister prepared by the Office of Environment and Heritage and obtained by EDO NSW for the Nature Conservation Council under FOI.

The document showed that the Minister was warned the laws could cause a 45% spike in land clearing and that they would mostly benefit very large agribusinesses that could clear land on a massive scale, not smaller enterprises and farming communities across the state. "The regulatory changes will further increase agricultural clearing by between 8% and 45% annually." (P3). We are alarmed by the latest move by the Government to weaken environmental protection by transferring regulatory oversight for native forestry on private land away from the Environment Protection Authority to Local Land Services (SMH April 9, 2018). Local Land Services does not employ ecologists or those who have wildlife conservation as their primary skills and it is already struggling to meet the increased workloads resulting from job cuts.

As less than 1% identified koala habitat in New South Wales is protected from clearing under the Code, it would be very sad day when the koala's extinction would make the Government realise that the Act and its Regulations are fundamentally flawed.

The regulatory and compliance role should remain with the Environment Protection Authority. If, however, the Government continues with this transfer to Local Land Services would you please inform us how many extra staff will be appointed with the appropriate qualifications to be able to administer the Code.

Yours sincerely

Graham E Holland

Dr Graham Holland, Vice President.