



Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

The Hon. Rob Stokes
Level 32 Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

18 May 2014

Dear Mr Stokes

NSW Biodiversity Offsets Policy for Major Developments and Framework for Biodiversity Assessment

Firstly, congratulations on becoming the NSW Minister for the Environment.

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community based volunteer organisation with nearly 900 members whose goal is to promote the conservation of the environment in the Greater Blue Mountains area.

We look forward to working with you in the interests of the environment and the people of NSW.

I am writing to you in regards to the proposed change in the Biodiversity Offsets Policy.

The Society is strongly opposed to this proposed policy change.

The most fundamental and precious aspect of our natural environment is its biodiversity. The very notion of providing loopholes and discounts so major developments can proceed will contribute to biodiversity loss and even extinction of species.

Contemporary extinction rates are 100-1000 times pre-human levels. This may increase 10 fold over the next century if current threatened species do not survive (Pimm et al 1995). Ecosystems rich in endemic species, such as Australian flora and fauna (Beadle 1963), dominate global patterns of potential extinction rates (Pimm et al 1995), and only 10.8% of Australia's remaining bushland is protected by reserves (Commonwealth of Australia 2003).

The proposed policy goes against the extensive and robust science available on effective offsetting.

Your predecessor recently announced a plan to bring back extinct species and have them enclosed in a sanctuary. Surely, the effort should be spent on protecting what remains – and this does not begin with a Biodiversity Offset policy – especially one as flawed as the one proposed.

For more detailed information regarding this proposed policy, I refer you to the Society's submission – lodged on Friday 9th May – which can be found on the [Society's website](#).

You should also be aware that the facility to lodge submissions was difficult to use. It would discourage people to make submissions, or worse still, cause their submissions to not be received.

When I lodged the Society's submission, the response on the webpage was "*would I like to upload a submission*". I received an automated email thanking me for participating in their survey. And yes, I am sure I was on the correct webpage for the Bio Offsets submission.

I also emailed the submission to ensure it was received.

In closing, we invite you to visit the Greater Blue Mountains area, and in particular the Ben Bullen State Forest. This area with its unique pagodas and biodiversity forms a part of our [Gardens of Stone Stage 2 Proposal](#). A proposal to either include these areas into existing national parks or as State Conservation Areas.

We look forward to an early response on this important issue.

Yours sincerely



Alan Page
President
Blue Mountains Conservation Society



Pagoda Rock Daisy (*Leucochrysum graminifolium*)
photo by Andrew Valja