



17th December 2008

**Re Independent Inquiry into the operation of the EPBC Act
Submission by the North East Bioregional Network Inc**

To Whom It May Concern:;

This is a submission from the North East Bioregional Network Inc. for the independent inquiry into the operation of the EPBC Act 1999.

The representation deals with a number of examples of landclearing and forestry activities which either individually or cumulatively are having a significant impact on the natural environment of NE Tasmania. Some examples relate to impacts on specific EPBC listed species such as the Swift Parrot, others to loss of threatened vegetation communities and some to key threats to biodiversity at a landscape level such as forestry, landclearing and *Phytophthora cinnamomi*.

Our submission comes under two headings, FORESTRY and LANDCLEARING. Under these two headings are numbered examples. Each example gives a brief summary of a forestry or landclearing activity with in many cases and associated photo. There is also a list of attachments which is correspondence that is related to the particular case. The correspondence is included to reflect the various authorities' (Forest Practices Authority, local Council, State Government, Federal Government, etc.) response to concerns raised at the time. Note that each numbered example corresponds with the same numbered attachment. (e.g. attachment 1 relates to example 1, attachment 2 to example 2, etc.).

Section 176 of EMPCA provides for the implementation of bioregional conservation plans. We would like to take this opportunity to support bioregional conservation planning as the best way forward in terms of a conservation planning framework. This would mean a stronger focus on ecological rather than political outcomes. Each bioregion could establish

reporting and monitoring regimes whereby ecological condition could be assessed as a result appropriate protection, management and restoration programs could be implemented to ensure the ecological health of each bioregion improves over time rather than the present case where decline is the norm.

Our view is that National Heritage Trust funding is not effective in halting the decline of flora and fauna in Australia. This partly is due to the fact that funding is often directed towards symptoms rather than causes of environmental problems and also because of State and Federal Government have supported numerous destructive policies in relation to landclearing, forestry, mining, dams, etc. which undermine community efforts to protect, maintain and restore our natural heritage.

We believe funding should be directed towards long-term conservation planning and implementation which leads to significant and meaningful outcomes. The highest priority should be on protecting more vegetation in good condition and at a landscape level to ensure the long-term ecological viability of our continent. Various landscape-level projects are underway in Australia (e.g. Gondwana Link). These need to be built on and supported in a holistic manner as opposed to the previous ad hoc approach which funding unrelated projects of often relatively little value. Protection can be achieved through additions to the public reserve system and by a major increase in funding to support conservation covenanting programs and purchases of private land.

There also needs to be significantly more funding allocated to manage our existing conservation estate. In Tasmania we have the ridiculous situation where a 10ha bushland reserve in Hobart is better resourced than the Douglas Apsley National Park (over 10,000ha). There is a major disparity between resources available in more populated areas with relatively small amounts of bushland to care for compared to rural areas with small populations and large natural areas. The State and Federal Government need to increase funding for on-ground management of our conservation areas (e.g. more rangers) and also support the private conservation covenanting program. This would not only benefit the environment but also provide more employment opportunities in rural communities.

In relation to restoration work this needs to be incorporated into a holistic landscape-scale planning framework. The Green Corps program has been a good means of providing young people with an opportunity to learn about the natural environment. This concept could be built on through a National Service type model to provide opportunities for all ages and parts of society to contribute to the restoration of nature in Australia.

It is critical that any future carbon trading system gives priority to restoration projects which are based on maximising biodiversity benefits. This would provide an opportunity to employ numerous people in rural communities and offer a transition from jobs which are damaging to the environment (e.g. forestry) to more environmentally friendly work.

Yours sincerely,

Todd Dudley, President
North East Bioregional Network Inc.

Postal address: 24751 Tasman Highway, RSD St. Marys 7215
Phone (03) 6376 1049
Email telozea_tas@yahoo.com.au