

Subject: 3.30pm MEETING: Qld Conservation Council, The Wilderness Society, WWF Australia (HJ)
Location: Minister's Meeting Room, Level 32, 1WS

Start: Wed 28/02/2018 3:30 PM
End: Wed 28/02/2018 4:15 PM

Recurrence: (none)

Meeting Status: Meeting organizer

Organizer: Leeanne Enoch
Required Attendees: External - Algester Electorate Officer; Daniel Lato; Hannah Jackson; jamie.merrick@des.qld.gov.au; Tony.Roberts@ehp.qld.gov.au
Optional Attendees: ROBERTS Tony

Categories: Environment

Published on DES Disclosure Log
RTI Act 2009

Subject: 10am MEETING: 73(2)Irrelevant Qld Campaigns Director, The Wilderness Society (AS)
Location: Minister's Meeting Room, Level 33, 1WS

Start: Wed 17/01/2018 10:00 AM
End: Wed 17/01/2018 10:30 AM

Recurrence: (none)

Meeting Status: Meeting organizer

Organizer: Leeanne Enoch
Required Attendees: External - Algester Electorate Officer; Angus Sutherland
Optional Attendees: TRACEY Alena; ROBERTS Tony

Categories: Environment

Published on DES Disclosure Log
RTI Act 2009

BRIEFING NOTE – MINISTER

Subject Meeting with | 73(2)Irrelevant **The Wilderness Society**

Approval required by 10.00am, Wednesday 17 January 2018

DEP REP

Ms Georgine Roodenrys, Executive Director, Climate Change Policy Branch, 3330 5829,
Georgine.roodenrys@ehp.qld.gov.au

Ms Megan Surawski, Manager – Industry and Communications, Climate Change Policy Branch,
3330 5156, megan.surawski@ehp.qld.gov.au

BACKGROUND

- The Wilderness Society (TWS) is a not-for-profit environmental advocacy organisation formed in 1976 focused on “protecting, promoting and restoring wilderness and natural processes across Australia.”
- TWS met regularly with Deputy Premier Jackie Trad MP and former Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for the Great Barrier Reef, Honourable Dr Steven Miles, on addressing Queensland’s land clearing rates and returning Queensland’s vegetation management legislation to pre-2013 requirements during the Palaszczuk Government’s first term.

KEY ISSUES

- TWS’ Queensland’s campaign is primarily focused on the problem of land clearing.
- The 2015–16 Statewide Landcover and Trees Study (SLATS), was released on 5 October 2017 and reported that land clearing had reached a rate of 395,000 hectares with clearing in the Great Barrier Reef catchments increasing by almost 50% since 2012–13.
- The high rate of land clearing means Queensland is Australia’s largest source of land sector greenhouse gas emissions noting that New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, and Tasmania are all net carbon ‘sinks’, that is, where more carbon is stored in the landscape than is produced.
- Queensland’s land sector is actively participating in the Commonwealth Government’s Emissions Reduction Fund with 125 vegetation management projects registered that have generated over 4.1 million tonnes of carbon abatement (MtCO₂e) and over \$49 million in offset payments to date.
- During the 2017 state election, the Palaszczuk Government committed to restoring vegetation management protections and investing \$500 million to undertake carbon farming with environmental co-benefits in key ecosystems across Queensland.
- Also during the 2017 election, rural sector peak bodies such as the Queensland Farmers Federation and Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) indicated support for market-based mechanisms that incentivised managing land for ecosystem services like carbon sequestration as important for managing land clearing rates.

Land clearing

Deputee Position:

- Deforestation is:
 - killing native wildlife (an estimated 68 million wildlife over two years in Queensland);
 - harming the Great Barrier Reef;
 - degrading soils;
 - destroying forest and bushlands; and
 - contributing to climate change.

R

- TWS is advocating for new laws with a long-term vision of zero deforestation in Australia including:
 - ending deforestation;
 - investing \$300 million in dedicated fund to support farmers and indigenous communities to regrow forests and restore land; and
 - support development of clean, "green beef" industry that can be marketed as deforestation-free.

Departmental Suggested Response:

- The Queensland Government is committed to introducing legislation to control land clearing and protect remnant and high conservation value, non-remnant vegetation.
- However, regulation will only address a proportion of the land clearing. This is why the government has committed to providing additional incentives and support of new industries such as 'carbon farming', which generate carbon credits through improved land management.
- One of the Palaszczuk Government's flagship environmental commitments is a \$500 million Land Restoration Fund (LRF) to support the growing carbon farming sector, focusing on supplying high quality carbon credits with verifiable co-benefits such as koala and threatened species habitat protection, improved water quality and Indigenous economic development.
- The Palaszczuk Government welcomes MLA's November 2017 announcement of an aspirational vision for a carbon neutral Australian meat industry by 2030 and looks forward to opportunity to work with MLA and other organisations on achieving similar ambitions.

Endorsed

Noted / Approved / Not Approved

Jamie Merrick
Director-General
 / /

Leeanne Enoch (or Chief of Staff on behalf of)
Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts
 / /

<i>Minister or Director-General comments</i>

Media release required: Yes No

Electoralates: Statewide

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED

MEETING BRIEF – MINISTER

SUBJECT Meeting Brief with Queensland Conservation Council, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and The Wilderness Society

Date: Wednesday 28 February 2018

Time: 3:30 pm

Attendees: Mr Jamie Merrick, Director General, Department of Environment and Science
Ms Alena Tracey, Senior Director, Department of Environment and Science
Mr Tony Roberts, Deputy-Director General, Environmental Policy and Planning
Ms Georgine Roodenrys, Executive Director, Climate Change Policy Branch

Purpose of meeting: Discuss Queensland policies related to vegetation management

Summary of the issues:

- Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) is a not-for-profit environmental organisation that coordinates within the conservation sector “to protect, conserve and sustain” Queensland’s environment.
- QCC wrote to Minister Enoch on 18 February 2018 outlining its concerns regarding vegetation management - **Attachment 1**.
- The Wilderness Society (TWS) is a not-for-profit environmental advocacy organisation focused on “protecting, promoting and restoring wilderness and natural processes across Australia”. Briefing Note related to this item can be found at **Attachment 2**.
- WWF is an international not-for-profit environmental organisation focused on “conservation of environment and wildlife”. WWF wrote to Minister Enoch on 12 December 2017 – see **Attachment 3**. A response to WWF is currently progressing through approvals.
- The potential issues and concerns the organisation attendees may have include:
 - the absence of amendments to the Environmental Offsets Act 2014 in the 2018 Vegetation Amendment Bill; and
 - retaining of the self-assessable codes and their strength to limit unnecessary clearing for the purposes of thinning and fodder.

Points of relevance:

Carbon offsets and vegetation management

- Queensland’s land sector is actively participating in carbon farming and the Commonwealth Government’s Emissions Reduction Fund.
- There are currently 128 registered vegetation management projects that have generated almost 4.8 million tonnes of carbon abatement valued at an estimated \$56 million in offset payments to date.

Land Clearing

- Driving down excessive clearing rates is at the forefront of the Queensland Government’s agenda and work is well underway to deliver the commitments outlined in the *Saving Habitat, Protecting Wildlife and Restoring Land: Ending broadscale tree clearing in Queensland (again)* policy.
- The Queensland Government remains committed to restoring vegetation management legislation to protect remnant and high conservation value non-remnant vegetation.

Land Restoration Fund (LRF)

- The Queensland Government is in the process of establishing the flagship \$500 million LRF.
- The LRF will directly support Queensland based land sector reduction projects and additional biodiversity and vegetation protection by facilitating projects that generate high quality carbon credits with verifiable co-benefits such as threatened species protection and water quality improvement in the Great Barrier Reef.

Clearing of Vegetation in Queensland: Potential Triggers under the Nature Conservation Act 1992

- Vegetation clearing in Queensland may trigger the involvement of the Department of Environment and Science under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (the NC Act) pertaining to protected plants, tampering with an animal breeding place, koala conservation and wetlands.

Protected Plants

- In Queensland, all plants that are native to Australia are regarded as 'protected plants' under the NC Act.
- A flora survey trigger map is prepared under the NC Act and identifies high-risk areas where individual plant species that are endangered, vulnerable or near threatened (EVNT) are present or likely to be present.
- It is a requirement before commencing any clearing that a copy of the flora survey trigger map on the department's website be obtained to determine whether any part of the area to be cleared is within a high-risk area.
- If the flora survey finds EVNT plants within the proposed clearing impact area, a clearing permit is required from the department before clearing can commence.
- If the flora survey does not find any such plants within the proposed clearing impact area – or the clearing can avoid such plants by at least 100 metres – a protected plants clearing permit is not required.
- Information about the protected plants framework is available on the department's website at: <www.ehp.qld.gov.au/licences-permits/plants-animals/protected-plants/>.

Tampering with a Breeding Place

- The Nature Conservation (Wildlife Management) Regulation 2006 prohibits tampering with a native animal breeding place except under specific conditions, which include the activity being part of a species management program (SMP) approved by the department.
- A SMP provides specific information on the species and habitat covered by the plan, identifies potential impacts on the species from the land clearing and sets out appropriate management actions to help avoid, mitigate and manage those potential impacts.
- Animal breeding places include obvious structures such as bird nests and tree hollows, as well as more obscure places such as amphibian or frog habitat where breeding takes place.
- Further information about SMPs is available on the department's website at <www.ehp.qld.gov.au/licences-permits/plants-animals/species-management-program/>.

Koala Conservation

- Under the Nature Conservation (Koala) Conservation Plan 2017, any person clearing a koala habitat tree in Koala District A (South East Queensland) or Koala District B (Wide Bay and Fraser Coast), of more than 10 centimetres in diameter at 1.3 metres high, must undertake the clearing in the presence of a koala spotter.
- Clearing must also be conducted sequentially to ensure the safety of all koalas located on the site and so they are able to move on their own accord during the clearing activity without human intervention.

Wetlands

- The department is directly responsible for the protection, conservation and management of wetlands in Queensland—a responsibility shared with local government and the Australian Government.
- There are many different programs, policies and laws affecting wetlands in Queensland so a proponent is advised to request a map showing regulated wetland areas that may affect his/her property.
- Information about this is available at: <www.ehp.qld.gov.au/ecosystems/wetlands/wetlands.html>.

Environmental Offsets

- Amendments to the *Environmental Offsets Act 2014* will be considered as part of the comprehensive review of the Environmental Offsets Framework during this term of government.
- Conservation groups will be consulted during the comprehensive review of the framework.

CURRENT POSITION

- *Land Clearing*
 - The government is committed to introducing legislation to control land clearing and protect remnant and high conservation value, non-remnant vegetation.
 - The government intends to maintain self-assessable codes particularly for the purpose of thinning and fodder harvesting because of the flexibility they provide to landholders.
 - However, regulation will only address a proportion of the land clearing which is why the government has committed to providing additional incentives and support of new industries such as 'carbon farming', which generate carbon credits through improved land management.
 - One of the government's flagship environmental commitments is a \$500 million LRF support the growing carbon farming sector, focusing on supplying high quality carbon credits with verifiable co-benefits such as koala and threatened species habitat protection, improved water quality and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development.

s.73 - Irrelevant Information

BRIEFING NOTE – MINISTER

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KEY ISSUES

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- The high rate of land clearing means Queensland is Australia’s largest source of land sector greenhouse gas emissions noting that New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, and Tasmania are all net carbon ‘sinks’, that is, where more carbon is stored in the landscape than is produced.
- Queensland’s land sector is actively participating in the Commonwealth Government’s Emissions Reduction Fund with 125 vegetation management projects registered that have generated over 4.1 million tonnes of carbon abatement (MtCO₂e) and over \$49 million in offset payments to date.
- During the 2017 state election, the Palaszczuk Government committed to restoring vegetation management protections and investing \$500 million to undertake carbon farming with environmental co-benefits in key ecosystems across Queensland.
- Also during the 2017 election, rural sector peak bodies such as the Queensland Farmers Federation and Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) indicated support for market-based mechanisms that incentivised managing land for ecosystem services like carbon sequestration as important for managing land clearing rates.

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Departmental Suggested Response:

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Leeanne Enoch (or Chief of Staff on behalf of)
Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts
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Minister or Director-General comments

Media release required: Yes No

Electoralates: Statewide

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Attendees:

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Ms Megan Surawski, Manager – Industry and Communications, Climate Change Policy Branch, 3330 5156, megan.surawski@ehp.qld.gov.au

Purpose of meeting: Introduction to Minister Enoch

Summary of the issues:

- The Wilderness Society (TWS) is a not-for-profit environmental advocacy organisation formed in 1976 focused on “protecting, promoting and restoring wilderness and natural processes across Australia”.
- TWS met regularly with the Deputy Premier, Jackie Trad MP and former Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection, Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef, the Honourable Dr Steven Miles MP, on addressing Queensland’s land clearing rates and returning Queensland’s vegetation management legislation to pre-2013 requirements during the Palaszczuk Government’s first term.

Points of relevance:

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CURRENT POSITION

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