



Planning,
Industry &
Environment

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Mr Rod Staples
Secretary
Transport for NSW
PO Box K659
HAYMARKET NSW 1240

Dear Mr ^{Rod} Staples

Establishing a clearance zone around state highways to ensure road access and safety

I understand that the Hon. Andrew Constance MP, Minister for Transport and Roads has written to you to establish a 40 metre 'clearance zone' around all state managed highways to ensure safe passage of emergency service vehicles.

The proposal may impact multiple business areas within the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment but has significant potential impacts to the environment.

Our initial estimate is that establishing a clearance zone would require 104,000 hectares of land to be cleared or roughly 145,000 football fields. Clearance areas may include ecosystems which help protect environmental values in National Parks and State Forests. Clearing at this scale would also create barriers to protected animals passing through the landscape.

There are legal and pragmatic considerations which would need to be resolved. The clearance zones could be established under a bushfire risk management plan however NSW and Commonwealth statutory approvals would still be triggered. For example, if forestry land was cleared, government might have to compensate Forestry Corporation, the timber industry and the Commonwealth, either through payment or purchasing additional land. Under planning controls, environmental impacts would need to be assessed.

These issues will be considered in the NSW 2019-20 bushfire inquiry. I suggest the findings and recommendations of this inquiry inform a whole of government position on the proposal to establish a 40 metre clearance zone around all state managed highways.

If you have any questions about this advice, please do not hesitate to contact Dr Paul Grimes, Coordinator General, Environment, Energy and Science, at or

Yours sincerely

Jim Betts
Secretary