

INQUIRY INTO INTEGRITY OF THE NSW BIODIVERSITY OFFSETS SCHEME

Organisation: National Parks Association of NSW Macarthur Branch
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Inquiry into the Integrity of the NSW Biodiversity Offsets Scheme.

The National Parks Association of NSW is one of the state's peak environment groups and was established in 1957. NPA Macarthur Branch is the region's oldest established environment group, operating as a sub-branch of Sydney Branch since 1975 and as a full branch since 1987.

The effectiveness of the scheme to halt or reverse the loss of biodiversity values.

The Biodiversity Offsets Scheme is currently failing to achieve the purpose which it was set up, i.e. to ensure that losses of biodiversity, due to development, will be offset by a nett gain in biodiversity, as a result of protection of areas and species potentially at risk.

Impact of non-additional Offsetting Practices.

The offset scheme has been used by some councils to gain extra funding, by allowing as offsets areas already reserved. An example of this is Campbelltown Council's allowing Noorumba Reserve to be used by Lendlease as an offset for their Mount Gilead development. Noorumba Reserve is not and was not under any threat of loss. In fact, Noorumba was and is a growing source of biodiversity, due to the efforts of local voluntary bush regeneration efforts. There is clearly no benefit to biodiversity by using Noorumba as an offset. But, council benefits, saves money, as Lendlease becomes responsible for ongoing cost of maintaining Noorumba Reserve. This is not what the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme was intended to achieve.

The Biodiversity Offset Scheme must be managed in a way that ensures no loss, but an ongoing increase in biodiversity in NSW.

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