

**INQUIRY INTO INTEGRITY OF THE NSW  
BIODIVERSITY OFFSETS SCHEME**

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this important inquiry.

I am greatly concerned about the current Biodiversity Scheme and the flaws in it which do not halt or reverse biodiversity loss resulting from major projects in NSW. Recent cases reported in the press (Defence Establishment Orchard Hills and Cumberland Plain woodland to name two) highlight the lack of transparency in the scheme and the non-accountability of how the biodiversity offsets are applied and who benefits.

In my own local area, there is concern about how the biodiversity offsets from the Ivanhoe Estate (Ivanhoe Estate SSD-8707) in Macquarie Park were calculated and how they were applied. It is not possible to find out what has happened to the compensation for the loss of Sydney Turpentine and Iron Bark Forest (STIF) in that estate.

Throughout NSW, major developments use biodiversity offsets to justify the extensive damage done to habitats. According to globally accepted standards related to development projects, offsetting should only be used as a last resort. It would appear this is not practised in NSW.

I would like to see a scheme where preservation of habitat and biodiversity are given priority in development proposals. I also think the scheme needs to be much more transparent to avoid the profit seeking and questionable conservation outcomes of the past. Serious changes are required in the way offsets are conducted and monitored.

I want to see it made easier for landowners to be involved in the conservation of habitats on their properties. My understanding is there are too many barriers for this to happen. At present, if landowners don't have previous experience of the scheme, financial resources (particularly the up-front cost of the initial ecological assessment of their land), staff or access to information and technical support then they are unlikely to participate in the scheme and conserve habitats on their properties.

The people of NSW deserve a much better, more transparent and well-monitored scheme of biodiversity offsets. And our flora and fauna deserve much better protection in a time of increasing numbers of threatened species because of major developments and climate change.