

**Submission
No 64**

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

Name: Dr Stan Bolden

Date Received: 31 August 2021

I am a retired Psychologist living on the Mid North Coast. My partner and I have a small property of about 6.5 acres that we are replanting with local rainforest species with a focus on providing food and habitat for local native wildlife species. We are very concerned about the loss of biodiversity in our area as well as at a state and national level.

Locally, we have observed a dramatic increase in urban development with little, if any, attention to the damage to local vegetation and loss of habitat for wildlife. In particular, we see a major degradation of our local biodiversity due to fragmentation of habitat as a result of unfettered clearing by profit-driven development.

While initially reassured by promises of biodiversity offsets, we are discovering that, once developmental approval is obtained, developers have little interest in fulfilling any agreement they have to provide offsets and our council has little funding to employ compliance officers to monitor compliance, less to fund litigation to enforce that compliance, and almost no capacity to penalise non-compliance. Penalties for non-compliance with biodiversity off-set agreements need to be increased substantially and non-compliance rigorously pursued through legal channels. Persistent non-compliers need to have any future development applications encumbered by binding and enforceable agreements with sufficient funding placed in trust to prevent defaults. White Haven Coal in Boggabri is a prime example of a repeat offender.

In addition, the suitability of biodiversity offsets needs to be assessed rigorously as they are often an unsuitable alternative.

Thank you,
Stan Bolden.