

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

Name: Mrs Joy Hafey
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Review Integrity of the NSW Biodiversity Offsets Scheme
Chair Cate Faehmann MLC

25th August 2021

Regarding: Submission to the review of the NSW Biodiversity Offsets Scheme.

Dear Ms Faehmann,

Habitat loss is the greatest threat to the survival of threatened species in NSW. Current offsetting schemes have failed to protect threatened species and biodiversity in general.

As a practicing ecologist and an accredited assessor, I have seen the devastating effects of land clearing on our native fauna and flora. The improvement in biodiversity values of an offset site is essential to ensure “no net loss” of biodiversity. Unfortunately the clearing of bushland and the functioning ecosystems they contain, cannot be replaced in the short term. Functioning ecosystems may take hundreds of years to develop. Specialist features such as large hollows, take at least 100 years to develop. An offset area, in the short term, is unlikely to provide habitat for the fauna and flora displaced by land clearing.

With the clearing of large tracts of bushland for development, there is an immediate loss of habitat. In many cases the land is fragmented and wildlife corridors are reduced to narrow areas along rivers and streams where proposed urban and industrial developments are not conducive. Red flag areas are overlooked.

The evidence for the success of offset schemes is lacking. In many cases, the disturbance associated with the offset areas, results in significant weed invasion and loss of biodiversity. The present Biodiversity Offset Scheme provides approval to legally clear habitat. No matter what the price charged, habitat is being cleared.

Yours sincerely

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