

BioBanking

Dismantling threatened species protection in NSW

Make a submission to the parliamentary inquiry into Biobanking

Legislation enabling the controversial Biobanking scheme was narrowly passed by NSW parliament last year and is proposed to begin operating in six months time.

Before passing the Biobanking Bill, parliament established a *Joint Select* to oversee the operation and establishment of the scheme, and that committee is now taking submissions.

The committee will evaluate the objectives of the scheme, and oversee a two year trial, but it will also examine options for applying the scheme to the clearing of native vegetation within the meaning of the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*.

Environment groups vehemently opposed the Biobanking scheme as the Government has proposed it, and using it to offset landclearing will be a profound step backward for native vegetation management.

Anyone who wrote, or lobbied or objected to the biobanking scheme last year, should now make a submission to this committee, send them what you already wrote, and urge them not to allow biobanking to apply to lands managed under the *Native Vegetation Act*



Please take a moment to follow the link below, or prepare a written submission. A sample letter is provided overleaf.

Written submissions may be lodged by sending to:

Joint Select Committee on *Biodiversity Banking Act 2006*
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

or they can be made online (and attachments can be uploaded) at this address:
<http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/web/submissions.nsf/Submission?OpenForm&ParentUNID=8C590E61D9A4A421CA257261000B17B4&House=LA>

Submissions close 2nd March, 2007.

Write or email your submission today

*** SUGGESTED SUBMISSION ***

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Dear Committee members,

Please consider this a submission to the *Inquiry into the Guidelines for the Trial of the Biodiversity Banking Scheme and Options for Applying the Scheme to Native Vegetation*.

I am very concerned and disappointed by the framework that has been established for the Biodiversity Banking scheme.

I do not believe that it would be appropriate to that the scheme should be applied to the clearing of native vegetation within the meaning of the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*, owing to the manifest flaws of the scheme, and the fact that the property and mining industry were instrumental in its formation.

Equity between farmers and urban property developers should instead be established by a basic legislative prohibition on broadscale land clearing for urban sprawl and mining.

In terms of the oversight of the scheme, I am particularly concerned about:

- **Provisions allowing developers to reduce or waive their credit purchase requirements by paying “environmental contributions.”** The details, limits and terms of such exchange are not established by the legislation. It seems to undermine the entire scheme, since developers will certainly prefer the option of paying a flat levy to buying biobanking credits, and there will be little or no incentive to establish credit-generating sites.
- **The lack of security for conservation offset sites**, since management agreements last for only 75 years, biobank sites can be developed by public authorities and biobanking agreements can be re-voked.
- **The relocation of conservation effort away from high conservation value areas threatened with development to less threatened areas.** It has been stated by the Minister for the Environment, among others, that the scheme will allow land with lesser economic value to be used as an ecological trade-off when biodiversity values are lost on high value land. Clearly, ecological integrity and conservation imperatives will be compromised for the economic considerations of property developers.

sincerely,

No law in NSW prevents broadscale landclearing of remnant vegetation for urban sprawl and industry. Without this basic foundation, incentive and offset schemes like Biobanking simply won't work.

