

Landcare NSW Incorporated

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Many Hands, One Voice
WANG WANG WANG WANG WANG

7th August 2016

Our reference: Feedback - NRC Review

Review of the Natural Resources Commission Act 2003

Resources and Land Use Branch

Department of Premier and Cabinet

GPO Box 5341

Sydney NSW 2001

nrcact@dpc.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Feedback on the Report from the Review of the NRC Act 2003

Landcare NSW thanks the Department of Premier and Cabinet for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft report of the review of the Natural Resource Commission Act 2003.

In general Landcare NSW is in accordance with the content of the report but members have raised the following points:

Enforceability

The review did receive from some stakeholders an opinion that

"the NRCs recommendations were not enforceable or their implementation not rigidly monitored".

To an extent, Landcare NSW shares this view, in that findings of past audits of performance of regional bodies by the NRC were not adequately utilised to lift performance across the sector.

However, Landcare NSW accepts the opinion of the Review that

"this (enforceability) is inappropriate for the recommendations of an advisory body" on condition that the independent advice of the NRC on natural resource management issues is shared and accessible to the community".

This accessibility was a key point supported by Landcare NSW in its February submission, and we would like to emphasise the absolute importance of clarity, timeliness and accessibility of NRC reports, not only to government and government departments but also to the community, the public stakeholders.

Landcare NSW would further like to emphasise that the response by the relevant departments to this independent advice of the NRC is also shared and accessible to the community, to ensure that the work undertaken by the NRC is seen to be utilised, or the reasons for its non-uptake is readily able to be understood by the community.

NRC role in Native Vegetation

Landcare NSW notes the rationale of removing the role of the NRC in relation the changes in the Acts surrounding native vegetation, however Landcare NSW strongly suggests that the wealth of knowledge and experience contained within the NRC from their current role, is incorporated to add value to the proposed new independent advisory panel, which is to be established to advise the Minister for the Environment on biodiversity conservation. Mechanisms could include a place on the advisory panel or by required NRC input to the deliberations of the panel.

Landcare NSW agrees with the recommendations, in particular with recommendation:

Broaden the existing purpose of establishing “a sound scientific basis” for the properly informed management of natural resources to establishing a “sound evidence base”

This recommendation fits broadly with a key thrust of the Landcare NSW submission, i.e. that there is a need to ensure that agriculture and the environment are not considered separately, which is often what occurs when analysis of NRM issues are undertaken through the lens of one scientific discipline . The integration of production and conservation is important not only at the landholder and community levels but also at the disciplinary level - agricultural scientists and environmental scientists must start seeing NRM issues together rather than apart.

The NRC play an important role in undertaking and promoting analysis based upon a sound evidence base, which can facilitate greater collaboration; thus providing benefits to landscapes, industries and communities.

Yours sincerely,



Rob Dulhunty | Chair
Landcare NSW Incorporated