

Letter to the Editor

Coffs Harbour Council has released a document in draught form titled "Coffs Harbour priority Habitats and Corridors Strategy 2010-2030".

I respectfully suggest every land owner should carefully read this document and after doing so, effect a submission (however brief) to better inform Council of the dire effects certain aspects of this proposal will have on their property rights, property values and even the future of their loved ones.

In this document Council clearly states it will utilise "funds received as a result of successful prosecutions from breaches in environmental zones or non-compliance" to assist with the funding of proposed habitat expansion. This clearly suggests two things: 1. Council intends to use the Big Stick approach and 2. Property owners will have to put their hands in their own pockets to carry out the work to establish, and then be responsible for the continued maintenance of any areas Council deems necessary, and is however, not prepared to fund. This does not seem quite fair to me, what do you think.

Council claims to have developed this strategy after consultation with "Community and Industry Representatives". My question to Council is this "As this effects every land-owner within the Coffs Harbour Council area, why were they not all personally contacted and asked to comment on the obvious detrimental effects these proposals will have on their business and their land values.

I suggest this is just another case of a Council doing the dirty-work for the NSW Government, and in doing so, shall unnecessarily lock up even more productive farm-land and private native forest. A dastardly act, when you consider that in most cases, there is little or no conservation advantage, and may in fact have a detrimental effect on the native flora and fauna.

Fencing off ALL riparian zones to forbid stock grazing and mechanical weed control will only succeed in guaranteeing weed infestation (for which the property owner will then be heavily fined) and at the same time create a wonderful corridor for feral animals to shelter and travel. This would also deliberately create a serious bushfire hazard, for which I believe Council should be held directly responsible.

The bottom line is this, I believe any additional conservation measures implemented on private property should be VOLUNTARY and land-owners must then be compensated annually for implementing these conservation mechanism's which disadvantage them as individuals, but benefit the community as a whole.

Council, at the request of Andrew Frazer, has graciously extended the dead-line for submissions to 14th of March (this month), so do yourself and other property owners a favour, and put in a submission, no matter how brief, and let Council know the ramification's of their proposal.

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