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30th January 2004

Emailed to nativevegetation@pc.gov.au

Native Vegetation Enquiry
Productivity Commission
LB2, Collins Street East
Melbourne VIC 8003

RE: Productivity Commission Draft Report: Impacts of Native Vegetation and Biodiversity Regulations

The Society appreciates the invitation to respond to the Draft Report. Although we will be unable to attend the public hearings in February, we provide the following short response to *Step 4: Clarify landholder and community responsibility* – draft recommendations 8 and 9.

The Report suggests over and above agreed regional responsibilities, conservation demanded by the wider community (e.g. to promote biodiversity, threatened species and greenhouse objectives) should be ‘bought’ from landholders. A requirement to pay may place a brake on the community’s demand for environmental services and compel prioritisation of environmental demands and objectives by Government (p.207). The Society believes it is likely that compensation / purchase / payment to landholders will be severely constrained by State and Federal budget. This would suggest that land deemed to be a lower conservation priority and not ‘purchased’ may then be available to landholders to clear the remaining native vegetation. The Society does not support policy or mechanisms that have the potential to encourage further clearing of native vegetation, and the Society is actively working towards a moratorium on land clearing in the State of Western Australia. The background reasoning to the Society’s strong stance on land clearing was outlined in our first submission to the Productivity Commission’s report and can be found on our website www.ozemail.com.au/~wildflowers “bushland” link from our home page.

The Report also suggests that the community’s willingness to pay will be tested and the cost/benefit trade-off revealed (p.207). The Society strongly believes that greater community input (i.e. State, Federal, taxpayer) to managing biodiversity is required.

Should you have any queries regarding this submission please phone (08) 9439 1363 or email jtregonning@westnet.com.au

Yours sincerely

Jo Tregonning

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