



David Shoebridge MLC
Member of the NSW Legislative Council

Greens NSW Submission
4 June 2014

Director
Planning Coordination and Support
Department of Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney 2001

RE: Far North Coast Environmental Zones review

Thank you for considering this submission in the Review of Environmental Zones on the Far North Coast.

The environmental values and beauty of the Far North Coast are of importance to the whole of NSW. The planning system that covers this region must protect and enhance the significant biodiversity that forms such an important part of the character of the Far North Coast.

In general we support the use of environmental zones, and recognise that when implemented appropriately and sensitively they improve environmental and social outcomes. We also recognise the positive role that can be played by environmental overlays particularly to create buffers around critical habitats and to ensure the precautionary principle is given effect in planning laws.

We do however note that the current proposal would result in the substantial weakening of protections for large areas of the region and to this extent strongly oppose the overall direction of the proposed reforms.

The major concerns we have with the proposal are the following:

1. We strongly oppose the removal of E4 zoning. This zoning is critical for protecting several Endangered Ecological Communities.
2. We further oppose allowing extensive agriculture in E2 zoning. In addition it is considered that lands adjoining National Parks and Reserves and form part of the buffer zone should be considered for E2 zoning in order to ensure crucial wildlife corridors are protected.
3. The changed criteria for E2 zoning may also create issues whereby even land with very high conservation value would not receive this zoning. Creating protection zones like the E2 zoning is only desirable insofar as it assists in improving environmental outcomes. If the bar is set so high such that even old growth forests would not be able to satisfy the criteria then that objective would not be achieved.
4. We oppose allowing extensive agriculture in E3 even with consent. Many of these lands are the steep hinterlands bordering National Parks and are considered utterly unsuitable for such practices.



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5. The lack of Coastal Zones to appropriately reflect the unique value of coastal areas.
6. Specific provision must be made to protect koala habitat with E2 zoning. The overlay process is considered insufficient to deliver this protection in a consistent and legally enforceable way.

The NSW-wide implications for the review are significant, particularly insofar as it indicated the possible loss of E4 zones across the rest of the state caused by the precedent created in this review.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office at david.shoebridge@parliament.nsw.gov.au or (02) 9230 3030 if you have any questions regarding this submission or require further information.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Shoebridge', written in a cursive style.

David Shoebridge
Greens NSW MP