

I would like to offer the following comments to the inquiry.

I feel that the most effective use of environmental funding is the purchase of significant natural habitat areas such as:

- Wetlands,
- Tidal zones of coastal creeks that are currently used for agriculture,
- Fringes of coastal and inland lake systems
- Significant riparian lands
- Wildlife corridors
- and core habitat areas for endangered species.

I feel that the resources allocated to land purchase and managing these areas should be greatly increased, as land purchase can achieve permanent on-ground conservation outcomes.

Purchased lands could be added to National Parks Estate, or in some cases leased back to landholders for a specified period with management conditions.

In some situations financial incentives for landholders could possibly be used to manage significant natural habitat areas. This is often less effective than land purchase, because there is no long term guarantee of ongoing payments (unless a perpetual trust is set up). It can also create inequities with landholders who are managing their land in an environmentally sensitive way, but are not being paid.

Funding for land purchases could come from a re-allocation of resources away from regulatory and administrative roles of Parks Services. These roles should be reduced and streamlined as they consume a large proportion of Parks Service budgets, but result in minimal on-ground benefits.

I have a Natural Resources Degree, and have worked in many conservation related positions throughout Australia over the past 25 years.

Regards

Matt Foley