

STAKEHOLDER SUMMARIES

BRIGALOW REGION UNITED STAKEHOLDER GROUP

The BRUS option seeks to balance economic, social and environmental outcomes from RACAC's Brigalow Belt South Bioregion (BBSB) assessment.

The BRUS option achieves this by:

- identifying 189,300ha of new conservation reserves throughout the public lands of the BBSB. This includes 31,700ha of state forest from which timber harvesting will be excluded by management prescription,
- proposing a mechanism to ensure conservation values are integrated with timber production – the community-based forest conservation management committee,
- supporting the Community Working Group's proposal for voluntary on-farm conservation incentives,
- achieving a biodiversity outcome only 3% less than that of reserving all crown land in the bioregion, whilst providing for biodiversity improvement within managed forest,
- allowing for the continuation of the timber industry through maximizing access to existing areas of state forests – reduces available volumes by only 3%, and allows for continued access to a sustainable yield of white cypress sawlogs of 68,000m³ per year and deemed to have only minor impact on the timber industry.
- ensuring continuation of access to the ironbark resource in the State Forests of the Pilliga and the Goonoo,
- recognizing the current value of the timber industry in the bioregion: \$38.4 million in gross output and generating employment for over 420 people,
- seeking to achieve timber resource security by the signing of a 20 year wood supply agreement guaranteeing yields at or about current levels of sustainability.
- identifying the fact that resource security also underpins the development of new value-added industries within the timber sector in the bioregion. These industries will see an immediate investment of \$6 million, a further investment of \$15 million in the short term and the creation of over 100 new jobs.
- sustaining small communities and providing for future development through provision of jobs and creation of wealth from a sustainable timber industry
- maximizing access to public lands for the apiary and mining and minerals industry
- supporting the need for the Aboriginal community to have access to public lands to allow control of their own cultural heritage management and in furthering their employment opportunities
- supporting tourism initiatives based on state forests to complement experiences available in the bioregion's national parks and nature reserves.

The BRUS option is supported by 24 stakeholder groups from the BBSB including Goonoo Action Group, Pilliga Land Users Group, Baradine Progress Association, local aboriginal land councils (Toomelah, Moree, Narrabri, Gunnedah, Gilgandra and Coonamble), Pilliga Forest Aboriginal Management Committee, Gwabegar/Pilliga Communitylink, Chambers of Commerce, Regional Vegetation Committees (Moree Plains, Narcoona, Inverell/Yallaroi), Country Women's Association, Landcare, Rural Lands Protection Board, NSW Shires Association, Newell Highway Tourism Association, NSW Apiarists, Petroleum Exploration Society of Australia, Forest Products Association and NSW Farmers Association.

The economic expectations of the BRUS option are based on the enhancement of existing industries and value adding, not on an untested and unproven paradigm shift from primary production to a wholly service-based economy.

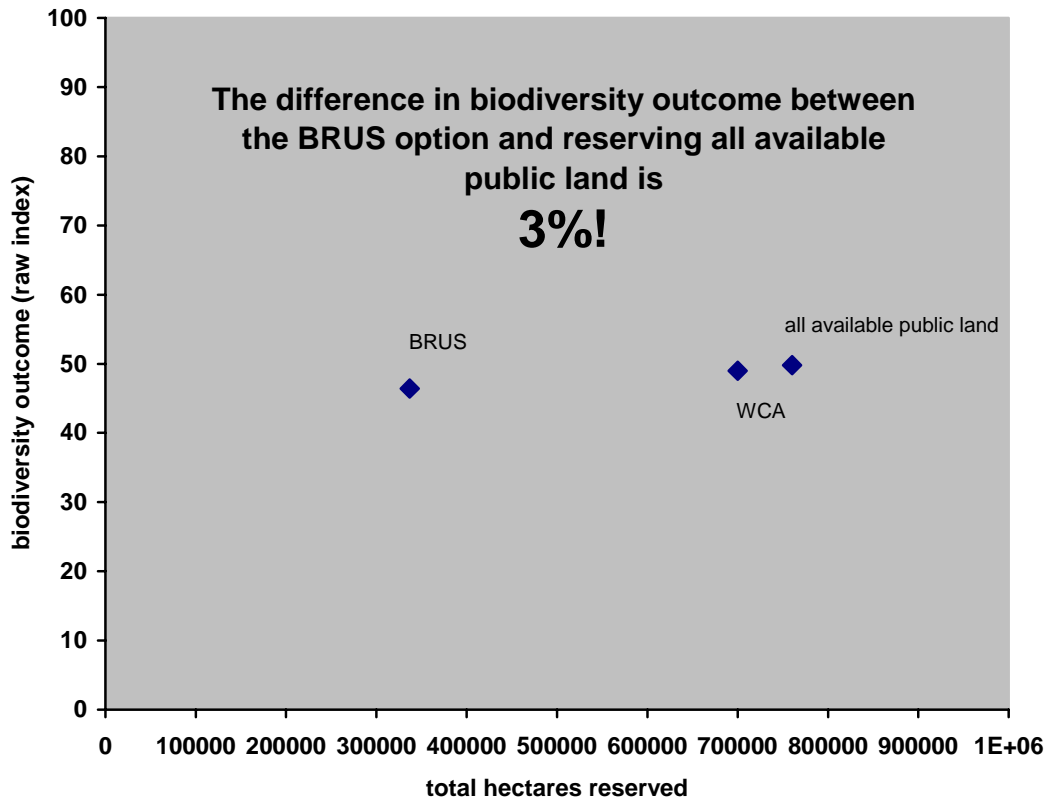


Figure 1: Bioregional framework: evaluation of the BRUS option and the WCA option in comparison with the biodiversity outcome achievable by reserving all public land in the Brigalow Belt South Bioregion (Source: National Parks and Wildlife Service)

	Timber industry	Apiary industry (Pilliga)	Coal & gas
Current value:	\$38.4 million	\$5.7 million	\$10 million last year alone in exploration
Current employment:	420	118	5
With resource security and guaranteed long term access to existing State Forests estate:			
Additional value:	+ \$6 million now, + \$15 mil. in short term	+\$1.5 million in honey and beeswax alone	+ \$600 million in resource value
Additional employment:	+ 100	+ 30	+ 50 in first 5 years + 250 in 10 years

Table 1: Current and future value of the timber, apiary and mining industries to the Brigalow Belt South Bioregion.

Is it worth the sacrifice of several small local communities, jobs and investment for a tiny 3% increase in biodiversity outcome?

Disclaimer: This information has been provided by the Brigalow Region United Stakeholders Group and therefore does not necessarily represent the views of the NSW Government. While every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that this document is correct at the time of printing, the State of New South Wales, its agents and employees, do not assume any responsibility and shall have no liability, consequential or otherwise, of any kind, arising from the use of or reliance on any of the information contained in this document.

A treaty with the environment, not a war with the people who depend on it!

WESTERN CONSERVATION ALLIANCE PROPOSAL

- It is estimated that only 8% of Australia's temperate woodlands remain. These are some of the most extensively cleared and heavily modified ecosystems in Australia. The Brigalow Belt South (BBS) bioregion contains two of the largest patches of temperate woodland left in Australia; Pilliga and Goonoo.
- The plants and animals of the BBS have been subject to some of the highest rates of extinction in Australia. More than 40% of animals, birds and ecosystems are now recognised as being at risk of extinction. It is a highly endangered and fragmented bioregion.
- The Western Conservation Alliance (WCA) is proposing a large increase in National Parks to address this environmental crisis in the region.
- National Parks are important because they protect areas from environmentally damaging activities (such as logging, mining, firewood collection and grazing) that occur on State Forest areas. Logging, in particular, degrades ecosystems, reduces habitat and thus causes many animal species to decline across the landscape.
- The protection of Pilliga and Goonoo State Forests as National Parks represents a vital opportunity to protect large areas of temperate woodlands from ongoing degradation and damaging practices. Their size and conservation value makes these areas completely irreplaceable.
- This proposal will create jobs in the bioregion. It will encourage a diverse regional economy with a value-added timber industry and strong regional tourism strategy.
- This option makes a very clear choice: it chooses a future for endangered species, a genuinely sustainable timber industry, a boost to tourism, and new alternative industry opportunities; it chooses an end to destructive logging, clearing for mining and agriculture, salinity, and unsustainable agriculture.
- The proposal recognises the extremely high cultural significance of the region to Aboriginal people and proposes that all reserve outcomes include options of Aboriginal Ownership or Joint Management as desired by the Aboriginal Community.

CONSERVATION VALUES

The WCA option provides the best chance of survival for 533 animal and bird species, 2705 plant species and 115 ecosystems in the region. It is the only reserve option that proposes reserves large enough to protect viable populations of threatened animal species and that will ensure a future for the 70% of woodland species that use hollows in old trees. It includes:

- A large National Park in West Pilliga that will protect poorly reserved Box and Ironbark woodlands and promote the survival of the largest Barking Owl population in NSW. It will also provide a core refuge area for woodland bird species and hollow-dependent animals. It is the most critical fauna habitat in the region and will significantly improve the chances of survival for at least 48 rare or threatened animal species.
- A large National Park in East Pilliga that will protect wilderness values, the endemic Pilliga mouse and the major hotspot of plant species diversity in the region. This area will protect habitat for a total of 648 plant species (including 4 endangered plant species and 7 significant species) and up to 80 ecosystem types.
- A new Goonoo National Park that will protect the largest and most diverse stand of ironbark woodland left in NSW and provide a refuge for at least 236 animal and 284 plant species. It will protect the best remaining habitat in the bioregion for the endangered Malleefowl, Eastern Pygmy Possum, Glossy Black Cockatoo, Chestnut-rumped Heathwren and Spotted Quail-thrush.

- A large Bebo National Park that protects 3 animal species which do not occur anywhere else in NSW; the Zig Zag Gecko, Dunmall's Snake and Delicate Mouse. The Park will also protect wilderness values and known populations of the endangered Black-striped Wallaby and Squatter Pigeon, along with at least 17 other rare or threatened animal species.
- A large number of smaller National Parks scattered throughout the region that will conserve critical vegetation remnants in heavily cleared landscapes. These will protect 41 rare, endangered or vulnerable ecosystems including several endangered ecological communities (such as Grassy White Box Woodlands) and at least 333 animal species and 693 plant species.

COMPARISON OF OPTIONS

- The WCA has conducted a comparison of this option with the NSW Government options. The analysis was conducted using conservation benchmarks set down in the National Forest Policy Statement and modified to reflect the endangered nature of the bioregion.
- A total of 87% of the area of conservation benchmarks on public land are met by the Western Conservation Alliance option, whilst the Government Option D protects only 66% and Option A protects only 39%.
- The WCA proposal will therefore improve the chances of survival for species and ecosystems in the region by at least 20% and up to 48% over other options.
- Since all other options include large areas of Informal Reserves (State Conservation Areas) and limited Formal Reserves, the actual achievement of conservation benchmarks in these options is uncertain.

JOBS

- The WCA is proposing a future for working communities and for nature. The WCA has conducted a detailed socio-economic study of the region and shown that the proposed new National Park system could be achieved in the region with no net loss of jobs.
- Consultants have conservatively estimated over 336 new jobs (growing to over 483 with multipliers) if the reserve and industry proposals of the WCA are adopted.
- The WCA analysis suggests that Government estimates of job losses are exaggerated, particularly as they relate to opportunities for thinning and the impact on the apiary industry.
- The Government analysis also ignores the historical trend of decline in jobs in the timber industry over the last 50 years due to increased mechanisation and downsizing.
- The WCA proposal can deliver a no net job less outcome by the implementation of the following approaches:
 1. A shift to value-adding strategies in the forest industry – through thinning of cypress regrowth; new timber products (eg laminated cypress); and replacing native forest firewood with less damaging and more sustainable sources. At least 50 jobs.
 2. A comprehensive National Park system to support new tourism projects and active promotion of the region to maximise longer term visits to a network of areas and facilities. This will provide construction and maintenance jobs, accommodation and services in local towns. Approximately 188 National Park jobs and 126 tourism related jobs.
 3. A fair share of Commonwealth and State funds to establish tree plantations for timber and reforestation programs to address salinity and other land degradation problems. Approximately 77 jobs.
 4. New industries such as broombush plantations, the production of cut flowers, native bee products and funds for farmers willing to protect private land conservation areas.

MINING

- More than 80% of high mineral potential areas occur on private lands in the region and most of this occurs on land already cleared of native vegetation. Therefore, mineral industries maintain access to the great bulk of their resource under this proposal.
- The availability of private land for mining means that State Conservation Areas or a veto on reserves on public land, is not necessary. For example a State Conservation Area on Goonoo is not warranted because there are extensive assessed coal reserves outside public lands and Goonoo resources are very speculative.

TIMBER INDUSTRY

The proposal will enable a genuinely sustainable timber industry to emerge in the region. It proposes the following approaches to make that a reality:

- Invest in an ecologically sustainable plantation base for the local timber and firewood industry and create more efficient use of resource through value-adding, thinning and utilisation of small logs.
- Develop sound ecologically sustainable forest management practices that mitigate the threatening practices of logging, mining, firewood removal, inappropriate fire regimes and grazing across all tenures.
- Ensure that there is no intensification of logging in native vegetation of the region.
- Recognise and encourage the management of cypress regrowth for timber on agricultural land.

PRIVATE LAND CONSERVATION INCENTIVES

- A comprehensive, region wide fund for a co-operative and integrated framework of conservation management across tenures is proposed which aims to enhance strategic remnants and connectivity in the landscape. The framework would:
 1. Increase financial and other targeted incentives available for voluntary, long-term conservation by private land holders.
 2. Provide for voluntary purchase of high conservation value private lands in the region, and leasehold land within State Forests proposed for reservation.
- Support major ecosystem restoration throughout the region.
- The establishment of a Biosphere Reserve containing the Pilliga-Warrumbungle area which will promote cross tenure conservation and sustainable land use.

For further information see: www.npansw.org.au/wca-bbs or email wca-info@npansw.org.au

Disclaimer: This information has been provided by the Western Conservation Alliance and therefore does not necessarily represent the views of the NSW Government. While every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that this document is correct at the time of printing, the State of New South Wales, its agents and employees, do not assume any responsibility and shall have no liability, consequential or otherwise, of any kind, arising from the use of or reliance on any of the information contained in this document.

ABORIGINAL STAKEHOLDERS WITHIN THE BRIGALOW BELT SOUTH BIOREGION

The Aboriginal Stakeholders are members of the Local Aboriginal Land Councils and Traditional owners within the Bioregion. These are made up of 17 Local Land Councils and two Traditional owner groups.

The Government proposed a number of scenarios for review by community stakeholders. These scenarios considered lands to be made available for the conservation reserve system. The Aboriginal communities took the initiative and developed their own scenario. This is based on information from the Culture and Heritage assessments and from local knowledge that has been given to us by Elders within our communities.

The main outcome for the Aboriginal Stakeholders was to protect and maintain their own Culture and Heritage for future generations. This meant that areas of significance and sites would be protected within the respected Aboriginal Land Council boundaries that were represented. The second outcome was for education.

Culture and Heritage to Aboriginal people is significant. It has been part of our learning and teaching cycles for life. Slowly we as Aboriginal people have been losing the opportunity of expanding on the existing knowledge that we have. Through the process of the two stages of the Brigalow Belt surveys, many Aboriginal people have been given the opportunity of regaining some information. A resourceful tool of information that has been gathered can now be used for all. This information has been restricted to community use only.

There has always been a concern with Aboriginal communities that "What has been taken away from us previously we may never get the chance to get back". This may be true in some aspects but with this process we now have the opportunity of taking the first step to acquire advancement.

We believe that all people need to be educated about how to maintain areas that are significant to Aboriginal people. Since November last year many stakeholders' opinions have changed immensely towards Aboriginal communities and the protection of their Culture and Heritage.

There have been considerable achievements by Aboriginal people through the Brigalow Belt South Bioregion assessment, and the stakeholder meetings. Government agencies were presented with options from the Aboriginal Stakeholders and these options have opened doors for new initiatives in policies and employment.

We have always acknowledged that we should support the existing industries within the Bioregion, and the other stakeholders within the process have also acknowledged the Aboriginal Communities in regards to their Culture and Heritage.

Many areas within the Bioregion are special to all Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. We all have worked the land. So the mechanisms need to

be in place so that our future generations will have an opportunity of gaining the knowledge that is out there.

Disclaimer: This information has been provided by Aboriginal Stakeholders and therefore does not necessarily represent the views of the NSW Government. While every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that this document is correct at the time of printing, the State of New South Wales, its agents and employees, do not assume any responsibility and shall have no liability, consequential or otherwise, of any kind, arising from the use of or reliance on any of the information contained in this document.