

From: Craig Davies [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 4 July 2023 3:21 PM
To: IPART <ipart@ipart.nsw.gov.au>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Biodiversity Credits Market

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to make comment on this latest look into the NSW Biodiversity Offsets Scheme and specifically the monitoring of the Credits market.

I have been given the responsibility to act on behalf of the Country Mayors Association of NSW in relation to all matters involving the Biodiversity Act 2017.

I wish to first give an overview of the current situation, its impact on Regional Development and the logic of monitoring the credits market. The BDOS has had the most detrimental impact of any Act of the NSW Parliament on Regional Development, Housing, loss of jobs and opportunities in my time as a Councillor of ten years. The complete lack of understanding and empathy towards Regional NSW by the bureaucracy of this state could not be better exemplified than through this ideologically based legislation that has brought about a housing crisis across all regions of the state. Introduced by the Coalition Government in 2017, its impacts include the loss of over 1000 homes, a school, a college and dozens of commercial developments. Its impact includes the loss of over \$ 1 billion in regional development costing hundreds of jobs. Some examples include

- 1) Coleambally township was designed in 1964 to accommodate a population of 2000 people. It currently sits at approx. 1330 people and with local landholders wishing to retire into town the Murrumbidgee Shire was hoping to finish the development to allow for further homes to be built to accommodate the retirees. BDOS Costs of clearing the remaining land within the original township planned some 60 years ago were assessed at \$24 million. Project shelved.
- 2) Bourke Shire in 2018 wished to develop a number of 6 and 12 hectare blocks to help alleviate the 9.5 % unemployment rate which largely consists of long term indigenous people. The sub division went ahead and when application was made to clear one of these blocks it was determined to be \$ 480,000 per block for BDOS credits. They had been put on to the market at \$48,000 taking their final price to \$520,000. Project shelved. No investment, no development, no jobs and the worst possible outcome for long term unemployed indigenous people. What an appalling outcome!. This in a shire of 43,000 kms².
- 3) Gilgandra Shire wished to develop a 20 hectare commercial block on the outskirts of town. It had been farmed continuously for 50 years. Assessors determined via audio monitoring equipment that it was the flight path of the Asian Eagle and BDOS costs of \$1.4 mill were applied. Project significantly downsized.

I have dozens of further examples but I think the point is made. Regional development has come to a significant idle due to the costs imposed by the BDOS, housing is stalled in the regions and jobs are going begging due to this poorly developed legislation.

In terms of monitoring the Credits Market, I believe this to be a complete waste of time. Currently the market is dominated by Inland Rail and Transgrid with developers largely moving out of the market to the extent that at least on major developer in southern NSW has left the state for Victoria due to the excessive costs imposed by the BDOS. This is nothing short of a government or bureaucracy induced housing crisis that is having massive social and economic impacts across all of

Regional NSW. To monitor the credits market now would result in false outcomes due to this being a false market. The situation should be monitored AFTER changes have been made to the Act that allows development to return to pre 2017 conditions . The market will remain as such until such time as Inland Rail particularly has completed their project in about 2031 . Monitoring the market now will deliver outcomes unreflective of what should occur without these major projects disrupting it.

Fix the problem first , being the cost of Credits, allow development to recommence and then start a monitoring program

Kind regards

Craig Davies.

Regards

Craig Davies

Mayor

Narromine Shire Council

Chair Alliance of Western Councils



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