



Gilmore Greens candidate, Carmel McCallum, has accused the Baird government of caving into developers, miners and the Nationals with changes to NSW Land Clearing Laws and the Threatened Species Conservation Act that will demolish environmental protection and shift responsibility for environmental protection to some grey zone between State and Federal responsibility.

The Baird government has announced its intention to scrap current environmental protections, and replace them with a new Biodiversity Conservation Act and amended Local Land Services Act, working against Federal provisions which pay landholders not to clear land under the Direct Action Program.

Carmel says, “It is no accident that the government announced this drastic overhaul of environmental laws on budget eve, because this legislation will deliver the worst environmental outcomes our state has seen. These proposed laws will make it easier to clear native vegetation, increase the risk of biodiversity losses – currently running at more than a thousand species in NSW alone – and contribute to CO2 pollution.”

“Farmers, developers and miners will now be able to access more comprehensive vegetation offset provisions, making it easier to clear biologically sensitive vegetation, including Endangered Ecological Communities.

They will also simply be able to pay a “bio-tax” to avoid offsetting land clearance altogether, so in reality that makes every environmental asset in NSW vulnerable. Just as the Great Barrier Reef is a national responsibility, so are all of our vegetation environments. We are all impacted by changes, because environments don’t recognise state borders.”

“It is tragic that these so-called reforms are turning the clock back and diminishing the heritage of environmental protection built up over the last 25 years. There is a horrible irony to the government’s effort to remove environmental protection barriers and free up land in the name of biodiversity conservation.”

The government has allowed eight weeks for public consultation for these two bills. The process to make a submission is set out at <http://www.landmanagement.nsw.gov.au>.