



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Biodiversity Codes must not add red tape to farm management**

NSW Farmers recognises the steps forward the NSW Government has made by releasing codes and regulations that form part of its biodiversity reforms, but warns they are at risk of being too onerous for farmers.

In November 2016, the NSW Government passed legislation, repealing the *Native Vegetation Act*, replacing it with biodiversity reforms designed to improve environmental, social and economic outcomes on rural farming land.

NSW Farmers' Conservation and Resource Management Chair Mitchell Clapham has expressed concerns that some of the requirements in the Codes, released today, are wrapped up in too much red tape.

"Some of the requirements in the Codes are over prescriptive, for example, the Invasive Native Species Code should be permitted to improve the environmental condition of the landscape. Instead we see Codes riddled with red lights.

"Some of the Codes are a move towards a fairer system, however there are requirements in these Codes that are not supported by NSW Farmers.

"We can't agree that it is fair to require farmers to set aside half or more of the vegetation on their own property, and undertake yearly reporting, forever. At the moment the settings aren't quite fair and we believe many farmers will not engage or participate in a system that is over regulated, complicated and riddled with restrictions.

"As the major stakeholders in the issue of biodiversity management on farmland, we are disappointed to see the hurdles farmers in eastern farming areas, in particular, will face in order to increase productivity on their farms.

"Farmers need to employ active and adaptive management across generations and while there is some positive progression, we're yet to be convinced the Codes are truly farmer friendly," Mr Clapham said.

NSW Farmers will be lobbying extensively during the consultation process to seek appropriate changes prior to commencement later this year.

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