Daly region not at risk of excessive land clearing

The Minister for Lands and Planning Kon Vatskalis, has disputed claims made by the Environment Centre of the Northern Territory over land clearing proposals for the Daly region.

Mr Vatskalis accused the Centre of scare mongering and deliberately misrepresenting the Government’s new land clearing laws.

He said the Northern Territory Government was leading Australia in its bioregional management strategies and environmental protection in the Daly region.

The Minister said he was considering a number of land clearing applications for the Daly, affecting around 8,000 hectares of land.

"The proposals add up to about 30,000 hectares of land.

"But after looking at the applications, I will only be considering granting consent to approximately 8,000 hectares for clearing," Mr Vatskalis said.

"Each application must be in accordance with the new Land Clearing Guidelines and consideration given to the draft Conservation Plan being developed for the Daly region. This Conservation Plan will mean development will occur within tight environmental and land management control.

"It should be remembered the Daly region has been earmarked for agricultural development for some years, therefore these applications should not come as a surprise," Mr Vatskalis said.

"The Daly region is around 2 million hectares, and unfortunately under the previous CLP Government, 195,000 hectares were cleared in the absence of guidelines and controls.

"These new laws, which came into effect at the end of last year, see the Government control what is cleared, and ensures land owners carry out environmentally sustainable practices."

Mr Vatskalis said the applications under consideration – all located a kilometre away from the Daly River - all provide for the required minimum 100-metre buffer zone around minor watercourses.

However, anyone wanting to clear land adjacent to the Daly River itself must provided for a minimum 500-metre buffer zone from the banks of the waterway.

to the top