

~~The amendments to the Agricultural Standards Act 1994 will provide inspectors with the power to enter a vehicle to undertake routine sampling of stock feed. This will assist in determining if feed is contaminated with restricted animal material.~~

~~Currently, the act does not satisfy a national agreement to establish a risk-based compliance inspection program as part of the national ruminant feed ban. Under the ban the feeding of restricted animal material to ruminants such as cattle, sheep and goats is prohibited in order to prevent the spread of transmissible diseases such as 'mad cow disease'.~~

~~The act currently lacks adequate powers of entry to enable sufficient auditing and testing of stock feed. Without the proposed amendments, routine sampling of stock feed can only be conducted on a voluntary basis. This compromises the integrity of the national ruminant feed ban and jeopardises our livestock industries and favourable livestock trading status. The amendments in the bill will bring Queensland into line with other jurisdictions and protect our livestock and export industries.~~

~~The bill also amends the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1966 to abolish the redundant Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Board and to transfer the functions of the former board to the chief executive of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.~~

~~The amendments proposed to the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002 are simple in that they will replace the current requirement for separate state pest management strategies for animals and plants with a single state pest management strategy covering both animals and pests.~~

~~The Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994 establishes QRAA to administer approved assistance schemes. The act has been reviewed in terms of its scope and the adequacy of QRAA's functions, powers, governance and administration arrangements. In response to the review outcomes, the bill amends the act to enhance QRAA's operational efficiency by allowing it to also administer parts of interstate schemes, streamline the appointment of, and delegation of powers by, the QRAA chief executive officer and clarify the requirements for future review of the act. To ensure that its provisions remain current and appropriate, the bill also provides that the act is to be reviewed at least once every 10 years.~~

~~Finally, the Forestry Act 1959 is being amended to omit spent provisions dealing with the abolition of the former Timber Research and Development Advisory Council which took place over a decade ago. In 2000 the council's assets and liabilities were transferred to Timber Queensland Ltd, which is a non-statutory, industry owned company. It is no longer necessary to retain these provisions in the act. I commend the bill to the House.>~~

### **First Reading**

~~**Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (12.10 pm): I move~~

~~That the bill be now read a first time.~~

~~Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.~~

~~Motion agreed to.~~

~~Bill read a first time.~~


### **Referral to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee**

~~**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee.~~

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## **<NATURE CONSERVATION (PROTECTED PLANTS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

### **Introduction**

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (12.10 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Nature Conservation Act 1992, the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and the Vegetation Management Act 1999 for particular purposes. I table the bill

and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Nature Conservation (Protected Plants) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013.

*Tabled paper:* Nature Conservation (Protected Plants) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013, explanatory notes.

Under the act all native plants in Queensland are protected. A diverse array of native flora plays an integral role in maintaining the health and diversity of ecosystems across the state. However, the previous government's approach to prescriptive, burdensome and costly regulation that ties industry and business in knots without achieving any real environmental outcomes needed to be addressed. As such, a review of the protected plants legislated framework was undertaken. It is a significant piece of regulatory reform that will reduce environmental green tape and improve efficiency for both business and government. The proposed reforms will also enable a high level of protection of our most threatened plant species.

The Nature Conservation (Protected Plants) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 delivers the first stage of the legislated review and lays the foundations for a new, simplified legislated framework for protected plants in Queensland. The Newman government is committed to practical and sensible outcomes for all Queenslanders. This approach includes overhauling and streamlining assessment processes for protected plants, removing unnecessary administrative and regulatory green tape. We will simplify permit and licence requirements for the agricultural, property development, mining and exploration sectors and for those who harvest and grow protected plants.

Let me paint a picture as to the size and the cost of the regulatory burden currently imposed on Queensland businesses. In its current form, the framework is overly complicated and places a significant regulatory burden on businesses and government, primarily through requiring flora surveys in all instances, with estimates indicating full compliance would cost business \$52.795 million and government \$705,000 each year. This new framework will see those costs slashed by more than \$50 million. Business regulation costs would come down from more than \$52 million to \$2.6 million and government costs would be reduced by more than half. This initiative will slash 60 pages of red tape, another significant contribution to the government's target of reducing red tape by 20 per cent. Adopting a risk based approach to regulation means permits and licences will only be required for activities that pose a high risk to plant biodiversity. All other activities will be exempt. Clearing permits will be valid for two years instead of the current period of six months and the framework will be simplified with the number of licence and permit types being reduced from 11 down to three. Subordinate legislation will be consolidated from five different statutory instruments into two. Put simply, savings will be achieved by streamlining assessment processes for protected plants, removing unnecessary administrative processes and exempting all activities that do not pose a high risk to plant biodiversity.

This bill seeks to amend the Nature Conservation Act to ensure the effective operation of the protected plants framework in the absence of the conservation plan as the conservation plan will be repealed. Relevant provisions are to be consolidated and transferred to the Nature Conservation (Wildlife Management) Regulation 2006. The bill will also clarify when offsets can be required, which will be consistent with the requirements of the Queensland government offset policy. It will be made clear when permits and licences can be issued for particular purposes and clarification will be provided on the types of conditions and requirements that can be imposed.

Amendments to the Vegetation Management Act and the Sustainable Planning Act will reduce duplication of assessment requirements by ensuring that harvesting of sandalwood is only assessed under the Nature Conservation Act. Further streamlining and reductions in duplication of regulation will be achieved through amendments to subordinate legislation as part of the review process. The reforms, as I said, will be cemented through changes to the wildlife management legislation and other subordinate legislative instruments under the Nature Conservation Act.

This bill sets the foundation for reforms and takes a sensible risk based approach to regulation that supports sustainable economic development and land use while ensuring protection of Queensland's unique flora. I commend this bill and the explanatory notes to the House.>

### First Reading

**Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (12.15 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee.

## <VEGETATION MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT BILL

~~Resumed from 20 March (see p. 774).~~

### Second Reading



**Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (12.16 pm): I move—

~~That the bill be now read a second time.~~

~~Before I discuss the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee's consideration of the Vegetation Management Framework Amendment Bill 2013, I think it is important to provide some historical context and a dose of reality into the debate around the changes proposed by this bill which will not, as some in the extreme green movement and in the Labor opposition have claimed, result in serious damage to our environment. Since European settlement, the clearing of native vegetation has been regulated on crown land. The focus in the first 100 years of this state was on developing our agricultural industries and providing infrastructure for our growing population. It was this development which resulted in the fantastic lifestyle, the great opportunities and prosperity that we enjoy today. Successive governments of all political colours supported this development, so much so that agricultural and grazing leases issued over state owned land actually had conditions requiring land to be cleared and developed to ensure that this time consuming and costly work would be done. Failure to comply with these conditions would mean forfeiture of the lease. The world, including Queensland, has changed.~~

~~This bill does not return us to those days where vegetation clearing was compulsory. In fact, the opposite is the case. Farming practices and technology also advanced as the state developed. The arrival of large machinery meant larger areas of land could be cleared more efficiently than the traditional method of clearing with an axe, a crowbar and a hoe.~~

~~A problem with Labor's vegetation management legislation in Queensland is that it was designed on the assumption that ecosystems are static. A woodland ecologist with 40 years experience, Bill Burrows, has described how changes in vegetation occurred over time and notably since the change in the use of fire as a management tool after European settlement. Whereas Indigenous Australians managed the vegetation with uncontrolled fires, European settlement has seen the use of controlled burns as a means of woodland thickening control. In Burrows's considered view, the VMA is, at best, based on very selective reading of the available science and, at worst, the framing of the act and its regulations deliberately and capriciously ignores a large body of scientific research and economic data relevant to the management of vegetation on grazing land. Nevertheless, so called remnant vegetation has been protected by the VMA because it allegedly represents original, pre-European vegetation communities. That is, its botanical structure and composition is claimed to be similar to that which existed when the land was first released for grazing purposes.~~

~~It is important to note here that the Newman government, and in particular the Premier, has endured a dishonest campaign centred around an allegation that an election promise has been broken. This is nonsense. To be clear, the legislation is being retained despite its significant faults. The act will continue to protect remnant vegetation in Queensland. A new purpose is being introduced to allow an application to be made to clear vegetation for high-value agricultural projects. Until such time as the application is approved, the vegetation is protected. That is the fact of the matter. The Vegetation Management Act is being retained, and remnant vegetation will continue to be protected.~~

~~Back in 1994, the then Goss Labor government in Queensland introduced the first efforts to reduce land clearing on state owned land. This was to be achieved through the development of clearing guidelines for leasehold land with landholder and community input. Landholders participated~~