


~~Mr SPEAKER: I inform the House that we have more students from the Manly State School in the electorate of Lytton observing our proceedings in the gallery. Welcome.~~

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## VEGETATION MANAGEMENT (CLEARING FOR RELEVANT PURPOSES) AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (11.39 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Vegetation Management Act 1999 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Vegetation Management (Clearing for Relevant Purposes) Amendment Bill 2017.

*Tabled paper:* Vegetation Management (Clearing for Relevant Purposes) Amendment Bill 2017, explanatory notes.

The policy objectives of the bill are to amend the Vegetation Management Act 1999 to create an obligation on the chief executive to issue an information notice where an application for clearing, as assessed under section 22A of the act, has been rejected and remove 'grazing activities' from the definition of 'high value agriculture clearing' to ensure that it is considered a relevant purpose in the chief executive's consideration of an application to clear under the act.

These objectives have been developed to address gaps within the existing legislative framework that constrain the ability of primary producers to clear land for legitimate purposes and enable access to a reasonable appeals process. Currently grazing is not considered a relevant purpose for high-value agriculture clearing. However, it is considered a relevant purpose for irrigated high-value agriculture clearing. This limits the ability of a grazier to establish sources of feed to improve the productivity of their operations.

In order to develop a more profitable and competitive domestic and international agricultural industry in Queensland, graziers must have a range of options for cultivating and sourcing feed. Although this bill broadens the scope of activities that are an acceptable reason to undertake clearing, the existing legislative and regulatory framework provides adequate mitigation against detrimental environmental impacts. Furthermore, the farm management practices of producers ensure a high standard of environmental management across the industry.

Currently there is no right of appeal or review for a person who has made an application under section 22A of the act where that application has been rejected. The only basis for appeal or review pursuant to the Vegetation Management Act 1999 is if the section of the act dealing with the decision requires an information notice be given with the decision. Currently graziers are unfairly restricted in the way they can manage their land to feed their cattle and make their business profitable. Graziers face extremely restrictive laws that require them to invest significant time and money just to prove to the department that they should be able to feed their cattle.

The current laws are unfair and they are holding our agriculture industry back. The bill ensures that graziers are allowed to undertake high-value agriculture clearing. This will allow dryland farming of improved pasture for grazing. This will reduce costs of growing feed which will make their businesses more profitable and competitive. Importantly, environmental protections remain in place under the bill. A grazier must still apply to undertake this type of clearing and the department will have an opportunity to review every application.

The bill also addresses big gaps in the existing legislation around appeals for farmers who have had their clearing application rejected. The bill requires the department to issue an information notice to a farmer who has had their application rejected. The farmer can then use the information notice to trigger a formal internal appeal of their application.

Agriculture has been given a bad name by inner-city types who have no idea about farming or land management. When these people think of farming they think of horns and pitchforks and barren landscapes where nothing can survive. I commend the bill to the House.

### ~~First Reading~~

~~Mr KNUTH~~ (Dalrymple—KAP) (11.43 am): 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 Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee~~


~~Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Linard): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee.~~

## ~~INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE~~

### ~~Report, Motion to Take Note~~

~~Resumed from 12 October (see p. 3114), on motion of Mr Pearce~~


~~That the House take note of report No. 52, *Oversight of the Family Responsibilities Commission*, tabled on 28 August 2017~~

 ~~Ms LEAHY (Warrego LNP) (11.45 am): The Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee visited the welfare reform community of Aurukun with Commissioner Glasgow and his staff to view firsthand the work of the Family Responsibilities Commission. I visited the community of Aurukun some 20 years ago and I am pleased to say that the community has changed over that period of time; however, there are still significant challenges. No doubt there has been a considerable amount of taxpayer funds spent in that community by governments of both persuasions to help with services and infrastructure in an isolated and challenging community.~~

~~Under the Family Responsibilities Commission Act the primary responsibility of commissioners is to hold conferences with community members and this is not easy. It is not an easy task at all. I wish to thank all of the commissioners in the communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge who undertake these conferences in local communities. Their task is a difficult one. They are the ones who have to implement the welfare reform at the front line and sometimes with their own family members or with family members of other families of whom there may be long term cultural differences.~~

~~The succession planning of these local commissioners is particularly important. There are not many people who are willing to do that work in those local communities or have the skills to do it. I can fully understand why they do not want to do those jobs for long periods of time and how they can become quite tired doing them. I understand that they appreciate the support they receive from Commissioner Glasgow and his staff. I particularly want to mention Ada Woolla, whom we met in Aurukun. She is a commissioner and was a great contributor to the *Not now, not ever* domestic violence report.~~

~~On behalf of the committee I thank Commissioner Glasgow and the other commissioners and staff of the Family Responsibilities Commission. I also thank those individuals, organisations and departmental officers who assisted the committee on its visit to Aurukun and, in particular, Brendon McMahon. I stress that it is particularly important to have succession planning with the Family Responsibilities Commission. The Family Responsibilities Commission is not something that you can stop and start at the whim of government funding; it is something that needs to be well planned. There need to be succession plans in place in relation to commission staff and also commissioners in the communities. I commend the report to the House.~~

 ~~Mr CRAWFORD (Barron River ALP) (11.47 am): As previously stated, the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee has oversight of the Family Responsibilities Commission. Last year when I was on the Finance and Administration Committee we had oversight of the commission but did not travel to Far North Queensland. A number of months ago the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee travelled to Cairns in Far North Queensland and sat down with Commissioner David Glasgow and his team to get a run-down as to the hard work they do in the communities they have oversight of.~~

~~We also travelled to the community of Aurukun with the Family Responsibilities Commission, the police and a number of different agencies and were able to see firsthand the huge respect that the locals have for the Family Responsibilities Commission not only for Commissioner David Glasgow but also for the local commissioners. They were having hearings the day that we were there. We had lunch with the local commissioners and spoke with them about the work they do. Interestingly, a number of those commissioners had been doing it for a very long time. It became apparent to the committee that succession planning in respect of the FRC was important not only for the commissioner but also for the local commissioners in the communities. Whilst they do an awesome job, they were very much~~