



Lachlan MILLAR MP

Member for Gregory

Submission No. 20



Ms Jennifer Howard, MP,
Chair,
Agriculture and Environment Committee,
Parliament House,
BRISBANE QLD 4000
VIA EMAIL aec@parliament.qld.gov.au

November 26, 2015.

Dear Ms Howard,

RE Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Committee regarding your deliberations on the Nature Conservation and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015.

As stated in the Explanatory Notes, the express, primary purpose of this Bill is to reverse a number of amendments made by the previous government that do not align with the current government's election commitments. While I accept the Government's prerogative, I am writing to express concern, as a rural Member, that the Bill applies a "one model fits all" approach which I believe will prove to the detriment of our western national parks and ecosystems.

I believe that superior outcomes that can be achieved with grazing leases in National Parks which are managed by organic beef producers. It seems to me that Queensland wins twice in this regard because we have first-class land management and additional GDP. I have seen the documentation which requires such producers to maintain higher standards than the management plans for the national parks entail. For instance, management plans allow the use of poisons for the control of exotic pests – flora and fauna. By contrast, premium beef producers must eschew the use of poison in order to satisfy the annual audits for certification which gives their product privileged market access.

My electorate is very sparsely settled and the biggest challenge in managing landscapes and ecosystems is access to sufficient skilled and knowledgeable staff to enact the management plans. Utilising local primary producers and landholders is an intelligent way of overcoming this and increasing the economic resilience of western areas at the same time. Because the Minister and the Department would be setting the standards that must be achieved, this would actually enhance conservation outcomes and make management regimes better adapted to particular ecosystems.

With its rigid approach to the renewal of rolling grazing leases, this Bill denies the Minister and the Department the capacity to apply judgement when adopting what may be the best practice scenario in certain locales. I would very much like to see some flexibility retained, even if a Minister chooses never to exercise it.

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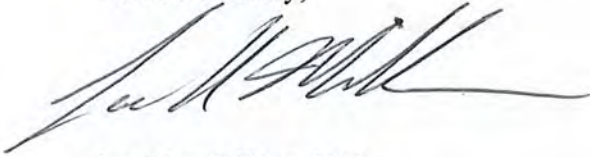
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There are strong historic reasons that this system of land management commenced. We can retain the advantages it brought Queensland, whilst conditioning the leases to ensure they sit happily within a modern conservation agenda. However, if this outcome is to be aimed for, the rigid approach contained in this Bill must be softened to provide an innovation space for park and land managers.

I thank the Committee for taking the time to consider my views.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Lachlan Millar', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Lachlan Millar, MP

Member for Gregory