

## Agriculture and Environment Committee

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**From:** Angela Freeman [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 9 December 2015 11:58 AM  
**To:** Robert Hansen  
**Subject:** Re: Nature conservation act amendments

Hi Rob.

Given the time limit you are running to, I'll just work through the Bill and make my comments.

Briefly, my background is both in business and conservation. My husband and I have been actively involved in supporting conservation and habitat restoration groups in addition to the Queensland Government for many years.

Whilst we operate successful wildlife attraction businesses in the Tropical North Queensland region, we have also been providing our own personal funds and fundraising dollars via our own North Queensland Wildlife Trust a registered DGR recipient.

Our assistance has gone to groups such as Rainforest Rescue for extensive tree planting and restoration in the Cape Tribulation Area, Conservation Volunteers, TREAT on the Tablelands, North Queensland Wildlife Rescue and many, many more.

In addition, Peter and I have been hands on with our own habitat restoration project at Hartley's Crocodile Adventures, restoring a degraded and abandoned mining/agricultural site into a viable and diverse habitat.

The amendments proposed appear to be on the assumption that everything was 'perfect' prior to the LNP changes and that things should be reverted back to the way they were.

Unfortunately and sadly this is simply not the case and a very large percentage of the 'parks' that are protected in Queensland require proactive conservation management to make them viable and useful habitats.

I travel widely in my regional area and across the State wherever possible and certainly simply declaring a park without actually ensuring their a resources or a system for doing the work is not achieving what needs to happen.

Hence the reverting back to a pure 'conservation' purpose does very much concern me as it infers a 'hands off', leave it alone and it will all magically recover in time outlook.

This historical perspective simply is only working to the extend of the limited reach of Park's resources and I my view limits and drastically restricts what is possible in a modern era of volunteering and crowd funding etc.

The better approach in my view is 'conservation, rehabilitation and restoration'. This suggest that something is actually going to happen and the status quo if it is not as it should be, can be changed or improved.

For example, with global warming and habitat loss/destruction, it may be viable to relocate some wildlife to other safer and suitable protected areas rather than seeing them become extinct or highly endangered.

My next suggestion relates to the 'Classes of Protected Areas'.

It is well known and understood that the Queensland Government does not have the resources financially or man power wise to undertake even a fraction of the work that is needed to restore some of the degraded areas in their parks.

Certainly there is practically no funding available for endangered or threatened species. There are more pressing needs on the State's resources and most sensible people accept this to be the case.

I have for some time proposed the concept of an 'Environmental Lease', in such a case the tenure holder has an allowable building and living envelope and undertakes to apply funds and their own resources in leu of rent.

My fellow Alliance for Sustainable Tourism group have now demonstrated that the volunteer system can work successfully in Queensland to assist Park Rangers with caretaking sites.

This concept is the next logical extension and could be made available to individuals or specific groups that wish to be actively involved and 'adopt' a specific protected area.

The benefit of living on site also assists with scientific research or observation as well as deterring poachers or other inappropriate activities such as drug growing that might otherwise take place.

This could potentially work in conjunction with Traditional Owners as they are often short on their own financial resources but could work in partnership with someone with skills and expertise.

In terms of management principles 'scientific' this again lacks the capacity to be 'proactive' about solving issues with a particular species that needs more than just protection.

Sometimes active steps need to be taken and this amendment in my view is too weak.

As regards management principles 'resource reserves' this section could potentially be the area for the recognition of collection of crocodile eggs for farming purposes to benefit indigenous communities and the community generally.

At this stage crocodile farming in Queensland is not supported with any crocodile egg collection system so our Cape traditional owners in particular are at a significant economic disadvantage relative to their counterparts in the Northern Territory.

It could also make provision for other traditional foods as resources so enterprises could be developed in conjunction with Traditional Owners for the sustainable use of such resources.

Grazing of stock in appropriate national parks should be permitted where needed and can actually assist to reduce fuel loads. If the amendments infer that this should never take place, then this clause should not be passed and requires more work.

The deletion of 'rolling term leases' is a real concern as it does not take into account the large capital investments required to be made by cattle producers in terms of infrastructure and stock.

Cattle producers cannot live a normal life never knowing if their lease is going to be cancelled and the stoke of a pen by a faceless person in George Street.

They need to make long term plans often involving the transition to the next generation who will not continue if they do not have certainty.

Tenures for Reef Operators and also under the new systems also Tour Operators have been extended significantly so there is no reason why consideration should not be given to grazing in areas where it can take place sustainably.

With the mining boom now well and truly in decline, cattle and other meat sources, do offer a major opportunity for employment and its long term potential given the level of demand should not be ignored.

This can also be done in such a way that the tenant is required to undertake certain restoration work and also work in conjunction with Traditional Owners. It will be a great lost opportunity if this section is simply removed.

In a nutshell it is great pity that only the conservation sector were the only ones who appear to have been consulted regarding these amendments.

Many of these groups are based in the South East Corner of the state and do not live with the realities and challenges of North Queensland both social and environmental.

In my view a conservation minded business approach would be more appropriate so that the objectives can be met with regard to the future.

Currently Queensland which used to be a leader in Ecotourism now lags way behind because of the inflexible position taken by the extreme members of the conservation movement.

The future needs of all Queenslanders, not just a select and exclusive few should be considered.

Regards,

Angela Freeman

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**From:** Robert Hansen [REDACTED]

**Date:** Friday, 4 December 2015 4:48 PM

**To:** Angela Freeman [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: Nature conservation act amendments

Angela

You are welcome to lodge a submission. If you can get it to us by Monday or Tuesday we should still be able to include it in all of our work. Any questions please give me a call.  
The submissions we have received are available [here](#)

Regards

Rob Hansen  
**Research Director**  
**Agriculture and Environment Committee**  
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**From:** Angela Freeman [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 4 December 2015 3:36 PM  
**To:** Robert Hansen  
**Subject:** Nature conservation act amendments

Dear Robert,

I had only recently found out about these amendments and was very interested in putting in some comments.

I was interstate this week and was not in a position to submit anything by our deadline.

Is there any provision for an extension of time as it was a very short consultation period?

Regards,

Angela Freeman

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