

To: Research Director

Agriculture and Environment Committee, Parliament House, BRISBANE QLD 4000

**Submission to the Agriculture and Environment Parliamentary Committee Inquiry into the
Queensland Land Clearing Reform Bill**

I wholeheartedly support this Bill and hope it will be passed into law. Appropriate protection of our natural vegetation is vitally important in so many ways. Vegetation is a key element of the ecosystems which support our wonderful biodiversity and ultimately ourselves. There are areas where land can be used productively, and productivity will be sustainable providing ecological values are respected, but there are also areas which are too valuable both for their special bio-communities and for the ecological resources they provide to us for clearing to be any more than a reckless squandering of our irreplaceable natural heritage. Of course, reducing and hopefully reversing the net loss of vegetation is also not only an important but a comparatively easy and inexpensive way to reduce greenhouse emissions and the climate change that threatens our state and our World Heritage Great Barrier Reef at least as imminently as anywhere else in the world. I own land in the highlands of the World Heritage Wet Tropics area where I am working to restore rainforest linkage to help protect unique bio-communities and increase their resilience to climate change. Even a 2 degrees Celsius increase in average temperature is expected to reduce by three quarters the area that can potentially support our highland ecosystems and endemics, and there are already signs of decline, just as this year we are witnessing perhaps the worst yet coral bleaching event on the GBR. As Queenslanders we should recognise that our state has not only these World Heritage areas but many ecosystems and bio-communities that depend on sensitive management of vegetation. Restoration projects in my area, including on my land, have taught us that replanting is extremely costly in money and labour and so must be comparatively small scale, and that even after 20 years the restored forest does not support the full complement of wildlife using adjacent old growth, so it is financially as well as ecologically imperative to protect old growth and natural revegetation as appropriate in the first place. It was heartbreaking when our vegetation management laws were relaxed to allow at times massive and indiscriminate clearing to resume, and I am sure I speak for all Queenslanders who are proud of our natural heritage and deeply concerned about global warming in saying it will be a huge relief for us to see the Land Clearing Reform Bill passed and implemented.

Yours respectfully,

[REDACTED]

Dr. Roy Swan, 8 April 2016

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Atherton, Queensland 4883; [REDACTED]