

SUBMISSION TO:**Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation
Amendment Bill 2016****SUBMISSION COVER SHEET****Closing date for submissions is 25 April 2016.**

Please complete and submit this form with your submission to:

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Agriculture and Environment
Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000**Organisation or individual:** Steven Van Ballegooyen**Principal contact:** Steven Van Ballegooyen**Position:** Land Owner/Farmer**Telephone:****Fax:****Mobile:****Email address:****Street address:****Suburb/City:****Postal address:****Suburb/City:**

Babinda

State: QLD**Postcode:** 4861**Is all or part of your
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SUBMISSION

I provide my submission in support of the continuation of the Current Vegetation Management Act 1999 and rejection of the changes proposed in the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 ("the Bill").

My overriding issue with the Bill is that its introduction in the Queensland Parliament on 17th March represents **yet another** variation to the Vegetation Management Framework, which has been amended over 18 times since its introduction in 1999. This constant change in legislation severely impacts on the ability of farm managers to plan and implement effective long-term property and business management decisions. Ecological processes work in much longer timeframes and can be severely compromised when mismatching, constantly changing regulations are enforced. Farmers have long called for certainty with the vegetation management regulatory framework. With the Bill being introduced when farmers are on their knees with over 86% of Queensland in drought conditions, it should come as no surprise that I am totally opposed to continued uncertainty and attacks on the viability of myself, the long-term sustainability of my business as well as attacks on fellow farmers.

In providing this submission I refer directly to the key provisions of the legislation which the 2016 Bill intends to amend.

1. Removing High Value Agriculture and Irrigated High Value Agriculture from the Vegetation Management Framework
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<p>The removal of High Value Agriculture (HVA) and irrigated HVA (IHVA) affects farmers in regions differently, with those in the north particularly hard hit. Throughout northern Queensland energy and protein become limiting in cattle diets during the dry season and this can cause farmers issues with stock survival and welfare through years of drought. HVA and IHVA permits provide farmers in northern Queensland with the opportunity to grow fodder and grain for supplementing in the dry season and finishing off stock for market.</p> <p>I have had to alter my plans for future vegetation management significantly and this will negatively impact on my farm's viability. When purchasing my farm approximately 18 months ago I did so with the intention of re-clearing approximately 100 acres of previously used farmland and turning it into pasture for livestock. The proposed changes destroy my plans for farming and as a result devalue my property immensely.</p> <p>I'm unsure what methodology has been used to determine the proposed Class C vegetation on my property but looking at the map it appears to be completely random without any knowledge of the existing vegetation. My property, Lot 11 SP244382, is 224 acres including at least 120 acres of rainforest. The remaining useable land, under this ridiculous proposal, will be limited to a patchy 30 or 40 acres. I believe the mapping for my property to be incorrect and it must be reviewed.</p>

2. Including High Value Regrowth as an additional layer of regulation under the Vegetation Management Framework on leasehold, freehold and indigenous land

The re-inclusion of High Value Regrowth (HVR) as an additional layer of regulation on leasehold, freehold and indigenous land is an overt grab by Queensland Government in search of targets for meeting international treaties such as the Kyoto Protocol and more recently the 2015 Paris Climate Deal. In 2009 when initially introduced, this HVR layer was prepared hastily in a 'desk-top' mapping exercise with associated errors including areas of non-native vegetation (such as orchards) and bare earth. In preliminary investigations of several properties it appears that the accuracy of the 2016 HVR is no better than that in 2009.

If the free market places a value of \$12.25 per tonne on carbon, what is the estimated dollar value of "High Value Regrowth" and where is the Queensland Government's recompense for farmers and indigenous land holders?

The land scheduled for rezoning as HVR on my property (Lot 11 SP244382) currently consists of various weed species including Guava and invasive weed tree species such as Harungana. An inspection of the property before this ridiculous classification would have identified this. My residence, the family home, also appears to be in a HVR zone.

There has been a distinct lack of consultation during this process and as a Labour voter I am ashamed the Queensland Government has taken this tact. Should this amendment bill pass I will be voting for any party willing to overturn this legislation at the next election.

3. That no compensation will be payable to HVA, IHVA and Property Map of Assessable Vegetation (PMAV) applicants during transitional arrangements

The proposal that compensation will not be available for HVA, IHVA or PMAV applicants during the Bill transition period may be a tactic to prevent panic clearing, but the implications for compensation for vegetation management in the broader sense are quite alarming.

With the cessation of broad scale land-clearing, compensation for landholders to offset opportunity cost, lost development potential and decreased property value has been a critical omission from the Vegetation Management Regulatory Framework. The issue of compensation has been debated heavily by federal and state legislators, however a precedent was set by the Beattie Government in 2004 with provision of \$150 million over 5 years to offset landholder losses due to the removal of their rights to clear. This however was a copout with the funds unable to provide effective recompense for opportunity costs incurred, despite prior assessment undertaken for the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in 2003. In 2004, there was no doubt considerable rejoicing by the Queensland Government who boasted of compensating carbon dioxide abatement for less than \$1 a tonne!

In the 2016 Bill transition period the situation is quite different to what it was in 2004. The threat to remove HVA and IHVA from farmers' potential to develop property provides considerable grounds for compensation, particularly for those that have structured investments and farm management activities to take advantage of HVA/IHVA in the near future. Also HVA/IHVA has attracted far greater interest in northern Queensland, with large swathes of marginal beef production areas provided the opportunity of growing supplementary feed to overcome the protein drought in the dry season.

The 2003 Commonwealth study mentioned above did not include north or west Queensland Local Government Areas and consequently grossly underestimated the areas to be considered for compensation. Another change since 2004 is the free market recognition of the value of carbon abatement with the recent auction of the Emissions Reduction Fund selling carbon at \$12.25 per tonne. The Queensland State Government needs to recognise the fact that they are robbing the rights of farmers to develop productive HVA/IHVA land sustainably and that the area for development and value for carbon are much greater than they were in 2004.

Signed:	
Address:	Mirriwinni, QLD 4871
Date:	14/04/2016