

From: [REDACTED]
To: [vminquiry](#)
Subject: Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016
Date: Thursday, 14 April 2016 6:37:13 PM

I would like to make a submission to the Agriculture and Environment Parliamentary Committee for the Inquiry into the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016.

I am an ecologist working in the environmental industry. I have seen first hand the mass clearing that has occurred "legally" out west in Queensland under the current legislation. The removal of high value regrowth from protected status has meant the loss of thousands of hectares of close to apex level mature forest including those listed as endangered regional ecosystems. The current legislation is in violation of its own Vegetation Act in that it has not resulted in "no net loss of vegetation" in Queensland. In my opinion this legislation can not come soon enough.

An important point to this new legislation that should be included is disallowing the use of the remnant forest to be used as an offset (Queensland Environmental Offsets Policy (Version 1.1), 2.3.1 Proponent-driven offsets, paragraph 3 "The land on which a proponent-driven offset is being delivered may contain remnant regional ecosystems").

Offsets should only be considered if they consist of high value regrowth in a degraded state, low value regrowth or cleared land. Replacing cleared remnant forest with a rehabilitated area results in "no net loss" which is the purpose of the Act. Using already protected forest as an offset results in the loss of the cleared area with no replacement area.

Aspects of this legislation that I agree with include;

- Restores protections for ecologically important regrowing woodlands ('High Value Regrowth') on freehold and Aboriginal land.
- Restores protections for trees next to riverbanks ('riparian areas') and extending provisions from some to all Great Barrier Reef catchments.
- Restores the *starting* presumption that a landholder is responsible for clearing that takes place on their property.
- Removes the ability to get a permit to clear for so-called High Value Agriculture, and thus stop large-scale clearing of remnant woodlands

I also think it important that the legislation is retrospective to 17 March which will hopefully deter panic clearing and applications. I do think this needs to come with a plan to disseminate and communicate this information to the landholders affected. It needs to be in the form that they relate to and have ready access to so that they cant say they didn't know.

Thank you for your time

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