

To the Research Director,

I am writing to you to provide submission relating to the proposed *Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016*.

I have an understanding that this bill removes the rights of all people who own land to maintain vegetation in an environmentally sustainable manner and those prosecuted are guilty until proven innocent. I believe I view Queensland from a unique position where I am involved in civil infrastructure, agriculture and residential operations.

I believe it is vitally important to give the most credibility in the decision making process regarding environmental management to those who work on the land and are directly reliant on a healthy environment for their livelihood. The introduction of this legislation will effect all Queenslanders with the following knock on effects:-

- Increased cost of living due to lower productivity of agricultural enterprise and hence increase in food and produce prices.
- Increased risk of death due to bush fires.
- Increased cost of purchasing a house due to the increased costs on developers to clear land to create housing.
- Increased pest and vermin numbers due to poorly managed habitats.
- Increased proliferation of noxious weeds in environments where land managers are not allowed to control growth.
- Increased cost of transport infrastructure due to the costs borne by construction contractors complying with environmental legislation.

I also refer to land management practices employed by farmers and aboriginals pre European settlement to maintain a healthy environment by minimizing overgrowth through controlled burning. Why introduce legislation which creates an uncontrolled environment? Why ignore the facts around sound vegetation management practices? It is foolish to think that people who rely on the land and ocean for a living would want to destruct the natural environment which they rely on for a living and hence impose these laws to make them a criminal until proven innocent. It contravenes the basic human rights of Queenslanders who are the definition of community role models.

It is not the place of city dwellers and politicians to provide opinions on subjects which they do not understand through first hand experience. This legislation clearly has been motivated by theoretical thinkers who have never spent enough time working with the land to understand the implications of the proposed legislation. Our education system is also failing everyday Australian citizens as people with no real understanding of the subject (teachers) educate the masses into poorly quantified beliefs on environmental best practice. Schools should educate our future generations on identification of native plants and animals, and also how to identify imported pest plants and animals. This would enable Queenslanders to identify poor vegetation management practices when they see them in every day life.

The very name of this bill is contradictory. Vegetation "Management" is not restricting the ability of those who live and work with the land to control growth. For this state to be environmentally sustainable, economically viable and a safe place to live, our government needs to understand the implications this legislation will have to those who they rely on directly for their standard of living.

I recently attended a forum entitled "Grow QLD" which had the purpose of discussing ways to encourage young people (both farmers and professionals) to stay in regional Queensland and produce our nations commodities. This legislation which has adverse impacts on sustainable land management and the cost of production do not encourage the next men and women of the land to persevere in a career which already presents significant challenges to remain viable. This in turn removes the social framework of our regional areas and destructs the opportunities for the next generation to deliver professional services in remote areas. Our state is too big and full of potential to allow this to happen. Our cities and urban centers rely on agriculture and development to stimulate our states economy.

I would like to see sensible environmental management legislation maintained so that the majority of Queensland Citizens do not have to bear the implications of the actions of the few irresponsible people.

Thanks for considering my submission on this topic. I hope that my submission will encourage a more thorough thought process into the knock on effects of poorly conceived legislation and promote robust conversation with regional Queensland when considering the best way to manage our states assets.

Regards,

Cameron Summerville.

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