



Principals: Brian McCarthy & Helen Sturme

Ingham Q 4850

14 April, 2016

To the Agriculture and Environment Parliamentary Committee,

As residents, landholders and farmers in Far North Queensland we would like to make a submission to the investigatory parliamentary committee concerning the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other legislation Amendment Bill 2016. We support this bill and recommend that it is passed by parliament.

Our main reasons for supporting the bill include:

- Protection of sufficient and suitable habitat for the survival of our native animals. In our area that includes mammals such as tree kangaroos, pademelons, musk-rat kangaroos; reptiles such as black-headed and amethystine pythons, birds such as the rifle bird, catbird, various bower birds, raptors, cassowary, amphibia (many Littoria species frogs) and fish just to name very few. These creatures need large and connected areas for food, shelter and reproduction.
- The impact of sediment and chemical run-off from populated areas is known to be destroying the inner Barrier reefs and probably the middle shelf reefs as well. I worked as a Marine Scientist at AIMS and Brian worked on the research ships (Townsville based) and we are aware of the decades of data collected by the Marine Institute that corroborates with these observations with data from the rivers and their runoff to the sea.
- Tree clearing is causing environmental devastation witnessed by enormous erosion events, soil structure and nutrient loss, changes in microclimates (no transpiration and water cycling) with lack of rain and increasing temperatures.
- Unforgivable amounts of CO₂ going into the Earth's atmosphere from the destruction of the trees and because of the reduced potential to convert CO₂ to oxygen via the tree metabolism.

It is also very important to remove the ability to gain permits to clear for so-called High Value agriculture as we should be thinking of sustainability in our precious and fragile environment and not removing remnants of unique, remaining bionomes including replanted or regenerating woodlands and forests. This bill also removes the "sorry, mistaken" clearing of vegetation and the "panic" clearing we saw just before the instigation of the Wet Tropics World Heritage protected areas here. People must be accountable for their actions and this needs to be made clear to landholders and machinery operators with respect to the 2016 Bill. Economic growth can never again be more important than sustainability.

We hope that this Committee will understand that along with many farmers and landholders who are way too busy and too stressed to write letters, that we are speaking for many on the land who support this proposed legislation and want to see this bill passed.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Sturme and Brian McCarthy