



Research Director
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Email: vminquiry@parliament.qld.gov.au

REF - CR2016-0049

Dear Sir/Madam

Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the *Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016*. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority supports the Amendment Bill and believes it is fundamental to the long-term health of the Great Barrier Reef.

The Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan (Reef 2050 Plan) and the Great Barrier Reef Report Card 2014 identified that the rate of loss of riparian vegetation in the Great Barrier Reef catchments has increased and required immediate protection. In 2013, Queensland was Australia's highest carbon emitting jurisdiction, producing one-third of the nation's emissions. A high proportion of Queensland's emissions resulted from this clearing.

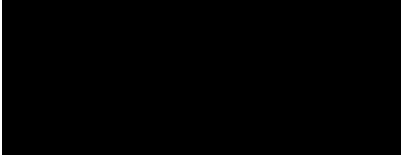
A key action of the Reef 2050 Plan is to strengthen the Queensland government's vegetation management legislation to protect remnant and high-value regrowth native vegetation including in riparian zones.

This bill reaffirms the government's commitment to protect the Great Barrier Reef by extending the protection of regrowth riparian vegetation along watercourses in all reef catchments. It will also reinstate the requirement to obtain a riverine protection permit to destroy vegetation in watercourses under the Water Act. When this provision was removed in 2013, it facilitated the unregulated clearing of native vegetation in many watercourses in the Great Barrier Reef catchment.

Protection of regrowth vegetation along watercourses in the Burdekin, Mackay-Whitsundays and Wet Tropics catchments has been in place since 2009. The bill will extend protection to remnant and high-value regrowth native vegetation, including in riparian zones, in the Burnett-Mary, Eastern Cape York and Fitzroy catchments.

The *Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016* provides an appropriate balance between protecting vegetation that plays a critical role in maintaining healthy and sustainable Great Barrier Reef ecosystems, whilst allowing the ecologically sustainable expansion of agricultural enterprises.

Yours faithfully



Bruce Elliot
General Manager
Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use

19 April 2016