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Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000
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18th April 2016

To whom it may concern;

RE: Proposed Vegetation (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016

For four long years while my husband has worked away in Fly in Fly out arrangement, I have lived on our 21.043 hectare property in Kerry QLD. When purchasing this in 2012, we were officially first home owners and we saw this property becoming our 'forever home'. My husband and I shared a dream to tidy up and transform the house and surrounding areas into a welcoming and eco friendly space. To see this vision come to pass I have worked tirelessly as a Special Education teacher at Logan City Special School with my husband mostly absent in order for us to fund our dreams. Over the years we have laboured to make this property respectable and functioning. The last step of our vision was to open up the surrounding area to reduce isolation and enhance the practicality of the land.

Imagine then, my utter devastation and frustration, when I learned that our property is seemingly no longer ours.

I fully understand the need for future proofing the environment for generations to come. One of the reasons that we live in the Scenic Rim is because of the natural beauty of our rural surrounds. In fact, both my husband and I grew up on rural properties within the Scenic Rim and we want our children to experience that same lifestyle. We are extremely willing to work within the current vegetation management legislation to preserve vegetation on our property (Appendix 1). This is because it empowers the rights of freehold landowners to make rational and effective choices to best manage their land. However, the proposed legislation has left us dumbfounded and distressed (Appendix 2). It indicates an absolute disregard for our **rights as freehold land owners**. Furthermore, there has been a total **absence of any individual consultation** and the **lack of thoughtful compensation**.

Our Rights as freehold landowners

It concerns me greatly that this proposed bill covers 100% of our property. Effectively, we are no longer landowners. As a young couple productively contributing to the successful workings of our community and our state, it is disappointing that our ability to negotiate has been denied. Our intention was never to fully clear or destroy the environment. But instead; to selectively clear to promote an aesthetic natural environment. At the moment, we live in a house surrounded by overrun vegetation that is deemed as high value regrowth (Category C – of concern regional ecosystem). This not only poses an extreme high fire hazard but also devalues our property. Surely

common sense must prevail! All we are asking for is the opportunity for intelligent discussion and logical negotiation around a proposed legislation that at the moment, provides no flexibility. I am sure you would agree that 100% equates to NO flexibility.

Lack of consultation

Such a significant change to our property vegetation map would surely warrant individual consultation. Yet, we did not even receive a pamphlet in the mailbox making us aware of these severe implications. Instead, we have been left in shock and distress with little response from the government regarding our plight. It is concerning that the claim made by the Deputy Premier stating that these changes would be introduced 'through a collaborative process with landholders...' (ABC Rural; 2015) has clearly not occurred in our circumstance. In fact, we had no ability to plan or consult with our local members and vegetation officers as I only stumbled across this information by chance after the bill had been introduced in parliament. Freedom of choice is the bedrock of our society. Yet, such lack of consultation and consideration has left us feeling totally manipulated, disempowered and controlled. Indeed, my family and friends will attest to the mental, physical and emotional toll this has had on both myself and my husband.

Compensation

Purchasing a first home is a major financial investment. These proposed changes stand to cripple our investment. Without adequate compensation we stand to lose significant value on our property and as a young working class couple, this news is devastating. As it stands at the moment, if we were to sell our property with such tight controls (although tight may not be a strong enough word for 100% zoning), there is a real risk that we would lose money and/or not be able to sell at all. How is this fair?

Additionally, the reverse onus of proof clause leaves us frightened and uncertain. The notion that any landholder can be persecuted if they pursue any form of clearing with misleading information from the department is appalling. Being informed that you are immediately guilty until proven innocent seems entirely irrational and primitive. Apparently criminals are treated with greater respect than decent hard working landowners. What sort of message is that sending future generations who want to pursue a rural lifestyle?

Conclusion

I have spoken to many of my young friends and this has left us totally disillusioned with the political process. How can it be ok for a developing company to be clearing 339 hectares (see appendix 3) of untouched and pristine bushland (ten minutes from our home) while I cannot make considered decisions to effectively manage the vegetation on my property (again that is 100% of my property).

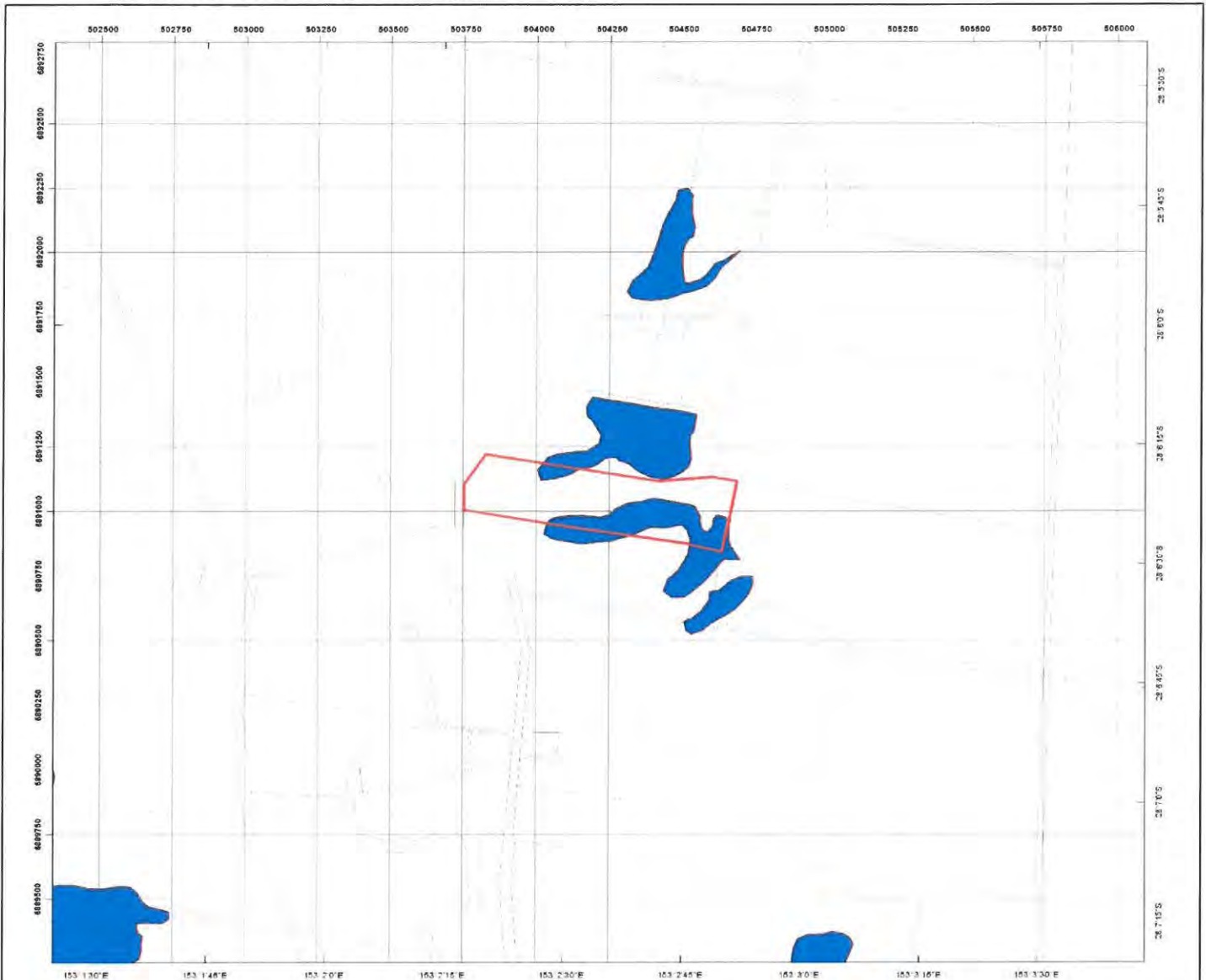
I strongly oppose this bill as it stands and I look forward to seeing common sense prevail.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs. Emma Parker

Appendix 1 - Current Regulated Vegetation Map

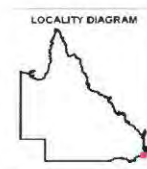


Regulated Vegetation Management Map

Please note, the Government has proposed changes to the Category C and Category R areas which are shown on the Proposed Regulated Vegetation Management Map. For more information on these changes, please refer to the Department's website.

Legend

- Lot and Plan
- Category A area (Vegetation offsets/compliance notices/VDIcs)
- Category B area (Remnant vegetation)
- Category C area (High-value regrowth vegetation)
- Category R area (Reef regrowth watercourse vegetation)
- Category X area (Vegetation not regulated under the VMA)
- Water
- Area not categorised
- Cadastral line
- Property boundaries shown are provided as a locational aid only



0 200 400 600 800 1,000 m

This product is projected into:
GDA 1994 MGA Zone 56

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Additional information required for the assessment of vegetation values is provided in the accompanying "Vegetation Management Supporting map". For further information go to the web site www.dnrm.qld.gov.au or contact the Department of Natural Resources and Mines.

Digital data for the regulated vegetation management map is available from the Queensland Spatial Portal at <http://www.information.qld.gov.au/>

This map is updated on a monthly basis to ensure new PMAVs are included as they are approved.

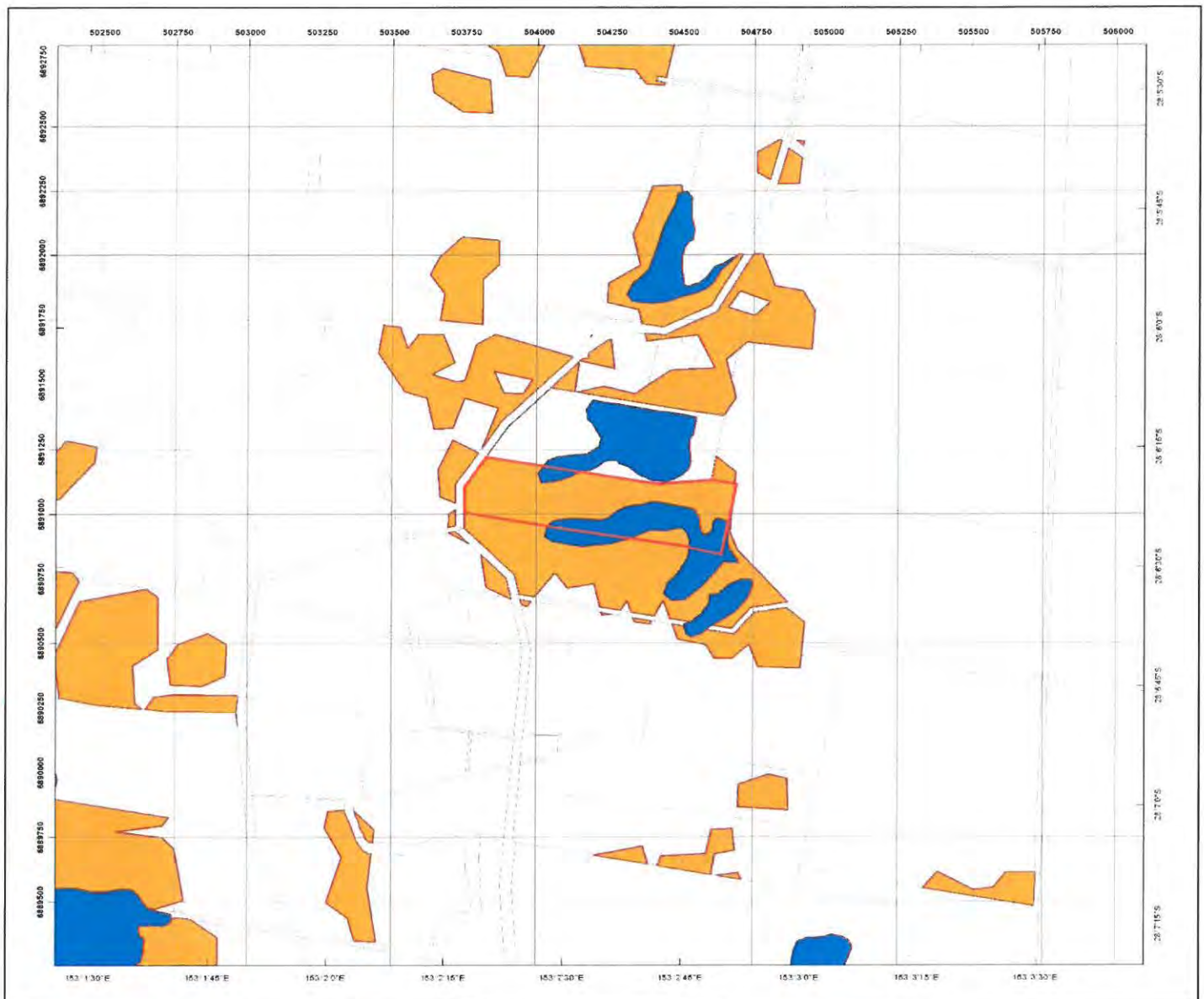


Queensland
Government



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Appendix 2 – Proposed Regulated Vegetation Management Map

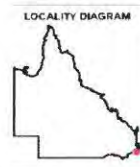


Proposed Regulated Vegetation Management Map

Please note, the Government has proposed changes to the Category C and Category R areas which are shown on this map. For more information on these changes, please refer to the Department's website.

Legend

- Lot and Plan
- Category A area (Vegetation offsets/compliance notices/VDecs)
- Category B area (Remnant vegetation)
- Category C area (High-value regrowth vegetation)
- Category R area (Reef regrowth watercourse vegetation)
- Category X area (Vegetation not regulated under the VMA)
- Proposed category C area
- Proposed category R area
- Water
- Area not categorised
- Cadastral line
- Property boundaries shown are provided as a locational aid only



0 200 400 600 800 1,000 m

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**Appendix 3 – 339 Hectares of untouched and pristine bushland to be developed in Beaudesert
Queensland 4285**



Oakland Residential Project at Beaudesert

Reference:

Jane Pinder (2015) Beaudesert to double as Scenic Rim council approves new project to cope with skyrocketing population Retrieved 18th April 2016 from <http://www.couriermail.com.au/lifestyle/home-garden/beaudesert-to-double-as-scenic-rim-council-approves-new-project-to-cope-with-skyrocketing-population/news-story/2ed9b43b9fee437499b089645a2e002f>