

20 April 2016

Research Director
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

SUBMISSION ON VEGETATION MANAGEMENT (REINSTATEMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENMENT BILL

Please accept my submission on the Vegetation Management Legislation Amendment Bill. Firstly, I support the urgent introduction of this bill because of the devastating impact of land clearing on climate change mitigation. Australia's remaining stands of forest are our best defence against the oncoming devastating impacts of global warming. As felled trees, these forests will emit carbon dioxide, as living ecosystems they will absorb significant amounts of carbon dioxide.

Furthermore, northern Queensland is unsuitable agricultural land. High rainfall in the absence of major geological events has resulted in very poor soils. Land clearing has the catastrophic effect of causing topsoil erosion. In the photos below, the left photo shows an area before land clearing and on the right is the same area after tree thinning. The red appearance of the landscape in the photo on the right illustrates a large amount of topsoil loss at even this level of tree loss.



As this bill also reintroduces land clearing controls on all catchments for the Great Barrier Reef, it also prevents the devastating impact of topsoil runoff in the Great Barrier Reef. Having worked in Water Quality and Investigations in DSITIA not long after the 2011 flood I was painfully aware of the impact that land clearing has had on the Great Barrier Reef. Turtle and dugong populations were severely affected by the destruction of their food source – seagrass beds had been covered in soil and destroyed. As an already struggling ecosystem, a natural wonder, important tourist attraction

and source of income for about 70,000 Queenslanders, it's very important we step up our efforts to protect the Great Barrier Reef.

It's also important to remember that these woodlands have intrinsic value as native species habitat. There's too many to name here but to mention a few, in danger are the following threatened species – Northern Spotted Quoll, the Red Goshawk, and the Golden Shouldered Parrot. It is land with little agricultural value but immense ecological value.

In an age when the rest of the world is progressing towards climate change mitigation and our failure to act on climate change is having a noticeable impact on our daily lives; this is a start in meeting the agreements of the Paris Summit and our obligation to pass on a sustainable environment to children and future generations.

Sincerely,

Larissa Roberts.

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