

SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE QUEENSLAND LAND CLEARING REFORM BILL

To whom it may concern,

My name is Rachel Cassidy and I have lived in Queensland all my life. I am worried about the current state of the environment in Queensland, specifically over-clearing of our bushland. Reports in the media concerning wildlife in peril from habitat destruction are on the increase. From Koalas in Redland Bay to the tiny endangered Black Throated Finch in western Queensland, our wildlife needs help.

Apart from providing habitat, the bush has great value as a carbon sink. Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation has been entrenched in the Paris Climate Change Agreement. Queensland has to show the world that it is prepared to take effective action to protect the Great Barrier Reef from coral bleaching by addressing climate change and introducing strict rules to protect valuable bushland is a great start.

In Queensland, the balance has for too long been in favour of the developers and land-clearers, starting in the late 1960's. Joh Bjelke-Petersen was a land clearing contractor in Queensland before he became Premier. He pioneered the "chain and two bulldozer" method of land clearing and then oversaw the destruction of the last of the Brigalow and much Eucalypt woodland all over Queensland. It is time to swing the balance back to protect the bushland that we have left. The *Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016* is a good start. It removes the ability to clear otherwise protected woodland for so-called "high value agriculture", it reinstates protection for trees on river banks in all of the Great Barrier Reef catchments and it protects re-growing woodland on freehold and Aboriginal lands. In addition, the Bill is back-dated so it mostly removes the incentive for panic clearing and it restores the starting presumption that a landholder is responsible for clearing that takes place on their property (i.e. removes the 'Oops' defence of claimed mistaken clearing).

In summary, I whole-heartedly support this Bill and recommend it's passing in to Law.

Yours sincerely,
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