

From: [REDACTED]
To: vminquiry
Subject: Submission to the Inquiry into the Queensland Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016
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Research Director
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

I wish to record my strong support for the Queensland Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016.

Land clearing has again accelerated in recent years due to inadequate existing legislation and lack of enforcement. This is completely unacceptable and proof that the current system is not working. We cannot afford to lose more of our valuable native vegetation. The negative impacts of land clearing are severe and well known - increase in release of greenhouse gasses leading to climate change, loss of habitat for native wildlife including Endangered, Vulnerable and Near Threatened species, loss of ecological communities, increased soil erosion with negative impacts on the Great Barrier Reef etc.

The proposed provisions will go some way to limiting these increasing problems. I support more stringent provisions including beefing up monitoring and enforcement of land clearing. The current watered down rules have directly resulted in losses of some of our most precious environmental assets (soil, water and biodiversity). The legislation must result in no net-loss of remnant and regrowth vegetation. If it does not achieve this then it will have failed. I am hopeful that the provisions in the bill will assist in this aim.

In Queensland we have some of the best systems in the world for documenting and mapping what is happening with our native vegetation. There is no longer any excuse for not acting as the data is clear and unequivocal ... the current system is failing badly and is unsustainable. This is a bad reflection on current agricultural and grazing practices overall which by definition are also unsustainable.

I strongly support the retrospective provisions in the Bill. Without them the door is open to a minority of cynical landholders to game the system. As a rural landholder myself I know that these people are out there and they make everyone look bad. The retrospective provisions will level the playing field and will help to ensure that everyone plays by the rules.

I support provisions to no longer permit clearing for High Value Agriculture. A very large percentage of freehold land in Queensland is already cleared. The economic benefits of continuing to clear more land are tiny in comparison to the values being lost and the damage being caused to our environment. I also support reinstating protection of regrowth vegetation which is essential to protect catchments, avoid salinity and soil loss and provide habitat and buffers to remnant areas. Regulations to retain riparian vegetation are also important to protect our waterways, our aquatic ecosystems and avoid land degradation and further damage to the Great Barrier Reef.

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