

From: [Max Godley](#)
To: [vminquiry](#)
Subject: Submission - Inquiry into the Queensland land clearing reform Bill
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20 April 2016
Research Director
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

I wish to make this submission to support the proposed Bill - because the clearing of land is such a critical issue, releasing million of tonnes of CO2 into the atmosphere - especially in the face of such serious concern about global warming and resulting climate change. Only this week we see the severe bleaching of 93% of the Great Barrier Reef. And while there is hope that some of this may eventually survive this time - not all of the Reef will be so lucky. And when this happens again - the corals will be further weakened and may not recover at all.

Our very thin and frail Australian topsoils are affected immediately following tree clearing as I saw with my brother-in-law's property in Southern Cross WA. Within 15 years of clearing, huge salt 'lakes' appeared throughout the huge acreage which was clear-felled for wheat and sheep production. Not only was the farming land ruined - with year after year of failed crops -- the local climate had changed. The clear-felling ensured seriously less rain in the broader area - and higher temps. This family later abandoned the increasingly saline land - no longer providing reliable crops.

WA or Qld - it makes no difference. We just cannot strip this old land of its shrubs and trees which hold the fragile soil together.

On my own small 5 acre holding of 15 years - after planting hundreds of shrubs and trees - I can see the return of so many small animals - such as echidna, snakes, lizards, bandicoots, small native mice etc, along with many birds - including raptors and owls - not seen in the early days on this block. I have worked hard to stop erosion here as the house pad had previously been carelessly positioned. When the land is cleared - so too is all habitat - along with the vital corridors allowing movement of animals for breeding.

With land clearing, the topsoils suffer wind and water erosion. We have so many examples of this. Back in the 1960s - as a younger person living in Melbourne - I remember about a week or more where the air was choking and red as the topsoil took off from inland broad farming and was recorded over in New Zealand. Removal of trees immediately releases soil to blow away and to wash away, scouring the land especially in heavy or cyclonic rain. From the air the soil can be clearly seen, spreading into the ocean, the sediment choking grasses, fish and our coral - and along with that - carrying farmland enrichments and damaging pollutants.

We in Queensland are guardians of the Great Barrier Reef. David Attenborough recently has made his serious concerns for our Reef known very publicly here in Australia. We need to listen to his concerns - along with those who have the specialist scientific knowledge of the damage that can so easily be done with indiscriminate land clearing.

I feel the Bill is important as it will stop the panic clearing, restore protection for woodland regrowth and make landholders responsible for clearing on their property - hopefully with appropriate fines for misdemeanours along with the requirement to make reparations. I

am aware too of the despair of Aboriginal people who watch their country being treated with such disrespect and greed.

So, the evidence is available to us all. I support the Bill and look forward to seeing positive changes to at last care for this country we call home - for our children and future generations.

Respectfully

Maxine Godley

[REDACTED]

Habana. Qld. 4740

Ph: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]