



save me a home amongst the gum trees

Mungarru Lodge Sanctuary

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Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

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submission

By email: vminquiry@parliament.qld.gov.au

Submission on the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016

I was a representative on the wet tropics region vegetation management committee in the 1990's and know first-hand how long and hard we all worked to establish the information that informed the vegetation management laws that were legislated in 1999. The legislation's intent was to ensure that remnant vegetation was sustainably managed and protected while still allowing economic development. The provision for 50metre vegetated buffers around wetlands, viable sized areas of habitat, connectivity, no clearing of areas of high conservation value, stated sizes of vegetation buffers on rivers, creeks and waterways; all of these were key and essential elements of the legislation.

The recognition of the retention of re-growth with the moratorium in 2009 added to these laws assisting in the protection of re-growth landscape linkages and riparian vegetation.

The 1999 legislation needed strengthening not weakening and the imperative to do so is only increasing with more data appearing daily about climate change and its effects on our landscape, our rivers, our water, our wildlife, the Great Barrier Reef and our lives.

State and federal government are allocation funding to address fragmentation of habitat, and provide connectivity for threatened species. Funding is being allocated to industry to try to recover and improve riparian and wetland areas to improve water quality and runoff. Without the re-introduction of this legislation we are all wasting our time and our money.

I work on a daily basis as do many others, for the recovery of the endangered mahogany glider in the coastal wet tropics. We know first-hand, only too well, that we can spend years trying to restore landscape linkages but can be defeated in a matter of days by one person's inappropriate clearing. This damage is not always intentional but clearing in this region the years 1999 - 2011 certainly indicates that legislation makes this less likely and encourages people to seek information before they start work. Just like our laws for road speed limits that are there to protect us from the few who might cause harm, our vegetation legislation needs to be law for the same principal of the greater good.

The fundamental purpose of the Act and key to this legislation is the precautionary principle and the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

I would like the legislation to be re-instated and strengthened.

I support:

- **the retrospectivity measures (to March 17)** *(past experience shows that without this, we may experience significant “panic” clearing prior to the legislation passing)*
- **the removal of permits to clear land for ‘High-Value Agriculture’** *(in the coastal wet tropics this could result in the loss of all remaining woodland habitat for the endangered mahogany glider, melaleuca veridiflora endangered RE.)*
- **the restoration of protections for ‘High Value Regrowth’ on freehold and Aboriginal land.** *(this is often the habitat that ensures linkage between viable fragments of habitat that support threatened species)*
- **the restoration of protection for riparian area vegetation** – *(remnant and regrowth for water quality, and landscape linkage it is essential.)*
- **the removal of the “oops” defense** *(this is totally unacceptable if the legislation is seriously trying to protect habitat)*

The re-instatement and strengthening of this legislation is essential to many species and ecosystems across Queensland.



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