

SUBMISSION TO:**Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation
Amendment Bill 2016****SUBMISSION COVER SHEET****Closing date for submissions is 25 April 2016.**

Please complete and submit this form with your submission to:

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SUBMISSION

Please find enclosed my submission in support of the continuation of the Current Vegetation Management Act 1999 and my absolute rejection of the changes proposed in the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 ("the Bill").

This Bill's introduction to Queensland Parliament on 17 March 2016 contains another baseless variation to the Vegetation Management Framework. If successful this will be the 19th amendment since the Framework was introduced in 1999.

Queensland farmers are currently enduring enough adversity with the ongoing drought. Farmers in South West Queensland have just experienced their fourth failed wet season in a row. To remain resilient in the face of these tough times we need our state government to simply support us through sound decision making, reduced red tape and greater certainty. These things help us to be more profitable and when we are making a profit we are better custodians of the environment.

In providing this submission I refer directly to the key provisions of the legislation which the 2016 Bill intends to amend.

1. Removing High Value Agriculture and Irrigated High Value Agriculture from the Vegetation Management Framework
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<p>Removing High Value Agriculture (HVA) and irrigated HVA (IHVA) provisions from the Vegetation Management Framework is not fair. Whilst the other states and territories of Australia have been able to develop their key agricultural regions through clearing and development provisions and prosper from doing so, northern Queensland may now be left out, even though the Australian Government White Paper on the Development of Northern Australia documents the extreme potential for developing Agriculture in this region.</p>



<p>The Australian Government are so sure of the potential returns on investment in Northern Queensland that they are spending \$220 million to upgrade roads to communities across Cape York. However, it appears through this legislation, that the Queensland Government does not want indigenous and non-indigenous landholders in this area to develop agricultural projects that would capitalise on these better roads.</p>

<p>An example of how this legislation would particularly inhibit indigenous development is that there are Indigenous landholders on the Gilbert River in northern Queensland who were preparing to submit IHVA applications which would have helped them stabilise their beef production enterprises and would have allowed them to employ more community labour on their properties.</p>

<p>Sustainable clearing for relatively small pockets of high value agriculture is also required to enable agricultural production to improve continuity of supply to food processors and meet the increasing requirements of international markets and Australia's Free Trade Agreements.</p>

2. Re-introducing Reverse Onus-of-Proof
<p>A basic common law right is the presumption of innocence until proven guilty. Furthermore, Section 24 of the Criminal Code: Mistake of fact, can be used to plead the case of a genuine person who has inadvertently done the wrong thing. These proposed changes to the Queensland Government's Vegetation Management Framework are a direct affront to the rights and liberties of farmers and treats them no better than convicted criminals.</p>
3. That no compensation will be payable to HVA, IHVA and Property Map of Assessable Vegetation (PMAV) applicants during transitional arrangements
<p>Times have changed. Back in 2004 the Beattie Government was able to get away with appearing like they were compensating producers for the cessation of broad scale land-clearing in Queensland by offering a paltry \$150 million over 5 years. The most individual producers could claim providing they satisfied the conditions for payment was \$100,000. This was for stopping the development of farms containing large tracts of remnant vegetation and for converting their productivity potential to National Park like levels for evermore!</p> <p>However this 2016 Bill transition period is quite different to what the situation was in 2004. The very terminology behind HVA and IHVA suggests that there have been significant investments made by many producers across the north that were looking to take advantage of HVA and IHVA to develop their properties in the near future. There are clear grounds for compensating these people this time.</p> <p>The other thing that has come along since 2004 is the carbon trading initiative which the current state government and their green preferential voters have been all for. The recent auction of the Emissions Reduction Fund priced carbon at \$12.25 per tonne and the government needs to realise that the value of carbon credits in this HVA and IHVA country if it were eligible for clearing is higher than it ever has been before and producers should have compensation for removing their right to claim these credits under HVA and IHVA by not clearing.</p>
4. Including High Value Regrowth as an additional layer of regulation under the Vegetation Management Framework on leasehold, freehold and indigenous land
<p>Like my response to the last key provision, the free market places a value of \$12.25 per tonne on carbon, what is the estimated dollar value of "High Value Regrowth" and where is the Queensland Government's recompense for farmers and indigenous land holders?</p> <p>I also have serious concerns over the accuracy of the mapping behind HVR status. Where is the ground-truthing?</p>
5. Increasing Category R vegetation to include the Burdekin, Mackay, Whitsunday and Wet Tropics Great Barrier Reef catchments and additional catchments Burnett Mary, Eastern Cape York and Fitzroy.
<p>I have great difficulty with the lack of science behind the necessity to include ≥50 metre buffers along streamlines. In fact, a study conducted in Queensland and published in 2016 shows that grass is a far better assimilator for nitrogen to prevent leaching into waterways. The current bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef is not caused by high nutrient runoff from agricultural lands so why should these catchments be included?</p>
6. Other matters relevant to the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 that the review committee should consider

appropriate and worth some consideration

Signed:	
Address:	
Date:	21 April 2016 Augusthella Qld 4477