



Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation Limited ABN: 90 090 629 066

Mr Glenn Butcher MP
Chair of Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
George St Brisbane, QLD 4000

22nd April 2016

Dear Mr Butcher,

**Re: Submission to the Agriculture & Environment Committee of Queensland
Parliament on the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) & Other Legislation Bill**

The Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation Ltd (QDO) welcomes the opportunity to lodge the following submission to Queensland Parliament's Agriculture and Environment Committee on the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Bill.

The QDO is the peak industry organisation representing the interests of dairy farmers in Queensland. The QDO is also member of the Australian Dairy Farmers and the Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF).

The QDO supports the content of QFF's submission and would like to provide additional comments on the Amendment Bill.

The lack of consultation by the Queensland Government in the area of Vegetation Management has meant that the concerns from the Agriculture sector have not been considered prior to the introduction of the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Bill into Parliament.

As such, the QDO submits to the Committee that it recommends to the Queensland Parliament, to reject the Bill outright.

Agriculture industries want to engage in a genuine consultative process to vegetation management to ensure that long term stable sustainable policies are developed and implemented, which provides for a balance of economic development, agriculture prosperity and environmental sustainability and investment certainty.

Vegetation Management is an important issue for Queensland dairy farmers and as such it is crucial that due process and true consultation with all parties be undertaken. QDO submits that the Queensland Government has failed in this regard.

The removal of provisions for clearing permits of High Value Agriculture and High Value Irrigated Agriculture excludes any opportunities for small businesses, including family farms, to further develop their businesses. It is this business development which provides new employment opportunities to local communities; businesses, that support other local businesses. Given that only Coordinated Projects will provide the only mechanism for these development opportunities, it provides a massive inequity between small business and big business.

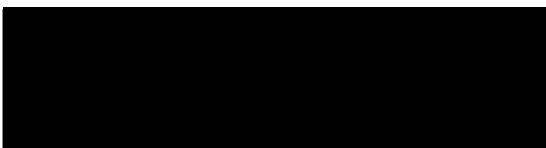
The proposed removal of *Mistake of Fact Defence* from the bill if passed would create a major inequity in our society, where the landholder would be forced to take the liability for information provided by the Department, which has the potential to be incorrect. This policy would mean that landholders aren't provided the same civil and constitutional rights that the remainder of our society are provided with – including criminals.

Alike the aforementioned, the reintroduction of the *reverse onus of proof*, has raised serious concerns for our industry, with landholders potentially being subjected to legal proceedings and the substantial costs involved, at no fault of their own.

The introduction of new Category R areas in the Burnett Mary and Fitzroy has the potential to have significant impacts on our farmers. Although our farm size (area) is not large, from initial assessments of individual farm impacts, there is the potential for the proposed legislation to make some of our farms unviable.

The QDO believes that the current legislative framework provides a solid foundation for sustainable agriculture and vegetation management in Queensland, whilst providing for development and investment certainty. The QDO believes there are options to further enhance the current framework, however the Government with this bill, has proposed to remove the elements of the framework that are most important to our industry. It therefore leaves the QDO with no choice but to reject the proposed legislative amendments outright.

Yours sincerely,



Brian Tessmann
President
Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation Ltd