

Research Director
Agriculture and Environment committee
Parliament House
Brisbane 4000

Re: Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment
Bill 2016

I wish to draw your particular attention to the following:

1) The original Vegetation Management Bill was brought in after extensive consultation, and research by many well qualified experts. If there were real problems with some clauses, then it would surely have been better to discuss and amend them. The repeal and total change to the Act spoke to vested interests, not concern for sustainable development of the land.

2) All the reasons for this legislation remain valid. It was designed to protect valuable remnant forested land and woodland from being cleared for agriculture, which could be carried out on previously cleared land. There is already a huge supply of cleared land in Queensland, unfortunately much of it not optimally farmed. Once land is cleared, it is very time consuming and expensive to replant with trees. In many environments there is not sufficient rainfall to achieve this. Riparian forest is vital to prevent erosion, silting and pollution of rivers.

3) So called "high value agriculture", requiring broadscale clearing, requires huge inputs of capital, chemicals and water. This is not a sensible model for country which suffers unpredictable climate, including regular droughts and irregular flooding. As many farmers have found, the "high value" is more often realised by the banks.

4) Mature native and regrowth vegetation is a vital habitat and food resource for native animals. It increases water retention in the soil, decreases erosion and keeps rivers flowing for longer into dry periods. Where there is more forest or woodland there is higher rainfall than adjacent cleared areas.

5) Past clearing has been very extensive and has often led to degraded land which is not productive, and very difficult to rehabilitate. Now it would be better to keep what little native vegetation remains at least until we learn to manage our cleared land better.

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