

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Agriculture and Environment Committee](#)
Subject: Vegetation Management Reinstatement Bill
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Research Director
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

28th April 2016

SUBMISSION RE: VEGETATION MANAGEMENT REINSTATEMENT BILL 2016

I write to support this Bill for the following principal reasons:

1. It provides increased protection for the State's biodiversity
2. It reduces the level of greenhouse gas emission which contributes to climate change

The level of loss of woodland forests in Australia in the short period since European settlement is alarming. This is a very serious National issue. About 90% of the vegetation of Eastern temperate Australia has been lost to agriculture, industry, transport and residential development. 50% of our rainforests have been cleared, and what remains is largely fragmented and degraded.

Land clearing is the major factor leading to the deplorable loss of native fauna and flora in this country.

Australia has lost more plants and animals to extinction than any other country. We have more threatened animals than 98% of the world's countries.

As a result of land clearing, around 5% of our higher plants, 7% of reptiles, 9% of birds, 9% of fresh water fish, 16% of amphibians and 23% of mammals are listed as Extinct, Endangered or Vulnerable.

Over 5 million birds are killed every year from land clearing. For every 100 hectares of land cleared, between 1000 and 2000 birds die from starvation, exposure or stress.

Nearly half our mammal species are threatened with extinction from land clearing and habitat destruction.

This Bill has the capacity to wind back this appalling carnage in a significant way.

Land clearing blew out following the removal of restrictions by the Newman Government. The 2014-15 State-wide Land Cover and Tree Study showed land clearing per year doubled following those changes. This Bill seeks to wind the destruction back and slow the rate of loss of biodiversity.

I strongly support the extension of protection the Bill offers to the riparian vegetation in Great Barrier Reef catchments. This is critically important. At present the catchments of Mackay Whitsunday, Wet Tropics and Burdekin have high level protective regulations. This Bill extends this protection to the remaining three, viz the Burnett Mary, Fitzroy and Eastern Cape York. This extension contributes to reducing the run off of sediments and nutrients onto the reef, which is already highly stressed due to climate change and pollution.

Land clearing contributes significantly to carbon dioxide and to a lesser extent methane emission. These are greenhouse gases and Governments and industry have a collective responsibility to minimise their release. The point made by advocates of broad scale vegetation clearing that Australia emits only a small proportion of the world's greenhouse gases, so what we do doesn't matter, misses the point. The point is that on a per capita basis we are the world's highest emitters. All Governments have a responsibility to mitigate against greenhouse emissions wherever possible. This bill makes a contribution in that regard.

The provision the Newman Government legislation made for unfettered broad scale land clearing for "high value agriculture" is repealed by this Bill. This provision was a farce and was abused by industry, clearing

many thousands of hectares for grazing purposes, not "high value agriculture".

Land clearing can still proceed under approved conditions.

Aboriginal interests on Cape York are protected through the provisions of the Cape York Peninsular Heritage Act, which is not repealed, as are agricultural interests, where development applications can be made under the State Development and Public Works Act 2007.

This is a common sense Bill and the matters addressed are ones the community debated and agreed upon many years ago.

It is staggering that environmental protections such as the original Queensland land clearing legislation were repealed by the Newman Government. At the time of its introduction it had very wide community support and was enthusiastically supported by Queensland Liberals.

I support the Bill.

Peter Shooter

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Sent from my iPad