

:
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Research Director
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
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Dear Chair and Committee Members

Submission to Committee on Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016

As a constituent of Nicklin, a resident of the Sunshine Coast, & inhabitant of our planet Earth I am most concerned that after a steady decline of tree clearing in Australia in the past decade, that currently it is spiralling out of control due to weakening of laws by State Governments.

During the Paris climate talks an important and natural climate solution resurfaced – TREES! Our forests have the capacity to provide up to one third of the climate solution we need over the next two decades.

We have seen clearing rates in Queensland rise rapidly. In 2013/14 alone, nearly 300,000 hectares of native woodlands were cleared, much of it vital habitat for threatened species such as the koala. This also released some 36 million tonnes of carbon into the atmosphere. Tree clearing is bad for habitats and our native wildlife, the Great Barrier Reef and managing climate change. - See more at: <https://www.wilderness.org.au/articles/help-bring-end-large-scale-clearing-qld#sthash.0pEbGqP0.dpuf>

Having received the April edition of New Internationalist with its feature article on “Saving the World’s Forests’ I was particularly reminded of the bigger picture of the dire consequences of obliterating our forests on a massive scale- ie less rainfall, destruction of wildlife & tens of millions of tonnes of greenhouse gas are emitted.

So, the long awaited news of the Queensland Government introducing a Bill into parliament to reform/ restore tree clearing laws, is most welcome.

I support the Bill. It is essential that this Bill is passed, to ensure the Great Barrier Reef, wildlife, soils, waterways and our climate are protected from the devastating impacts of broadscale clearing.

It will- (1) Restore protections for ‘High Value Regrowth’

(2) Remove ability to get a clear permit for High Value Agriculture- thus stopping large scale clearing of remnant woodlands, and

(3) Restore protection for trees next to riverbanks (riparian areas) and extend provisions from some to all Great Barrier Reef catchments.

(4) Restore the starting presumption that a landholder is responsible for clearing that takes place on their property.

(5)It makes much of the prospective legislation retrospective to 17th March, in an attempt to deter panic clearing and panic applications.

Yours sincerely, Eve Plant