

From: [REDACTED]
To: [vminquiry](#)
Subject: Inquiry into the Queensland Land Clearing Reform Bill
Date: Monday, 25 April 2016 5:13:17 PM

Research Director
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Research Director

I am writing a brief letter to support the reforms outlined in the proposed *Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016*, which I understand has been referred to the Agriculture and Environment Parliamentary Committee for the Inquiry into the Queensland Land Clearing Reform Bill.

I am extremely concerned about the excessive clearing of vegetation in Queensland which has been recently reported in a range of forums. For example, it was distressing to read in an article in the Guardian Australia (29 February 2016) that 300,000 hectares were cleared in Queensland in 2013-14, double the rate in 2011-12, and that between 2012 and 2015 land clearing emissions in Australia rose 11 times faster than any other sector.

I believe that there are serious negative impacts resulting from excessive clearing of vegetation including increased carbon emissions (contributing to the critical problem of climate change), increased loss of habitat for birds and animals, and increased destruction of waterways. My concerns relating to climate change and destruction of the waterways also include the significant potential damage to the highly valued Great Barrier Reef.

I am also concerned about the social and cultural impacts of excessive clearing of vegetation, particularly for Indigenous peoples. While I understand the need to support the agricultural industry (and particularly to make options available for Indigenous communities in this area), there must be a balance with environmental sustainability (and related economic activities).

I welcome the Queensland government's commitments to protect the Great Barrier Reef, to reduce Queensland's carbon emissions by reinstating the vegetation protection laws repealed by the previous government, and to re-introduce riverine protection permits to guard against excessive clearing of riverine vegetation.

I would like to support a more responsible vegetation management structure with adequate conservation outcomes, as outlined in the proposed *Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016*. In particular I would like to support the removal of the option of permits for large-scale clearing of remnant woodlands for High Value Agriculture. I would also like to support the restoring of protections for ecologically important regrowing woodlands on freehold and Aboriginal land, and for trees next to riverbanks and all Great Barrier Reef catchments.

It is important that the landholder is held responsible for all clearing that takes place on their property and is not able to claim that it was mistaken clearing. It is also important that the prospective legislation is made retrospective to 17 March, to discourage panic clearing and applications.

As an older Australian, I have directly experienced the effects of tree clearing for farming and other development over the years, particularly the loss of habitat for many birds and animals who may no longer be seen, and the loss of many beautiful landscapes which will never be regained. Today there is also the growing awareness of the significance of tree clearing to the disastrous impacts of climate change. I urge you to take action on this issue to arrest the decline of our environment, for future generations.

Yours sincerely

Sue O'Brien

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