

*Pippa Kern*

**Auchenflower 4066**

27.04.16

Research Director  
Agriculture and Environment Committee  
Parliament House  
BRISBANE QLD 4000  
*Email: [vminquiry@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:vminquiry@parliament.qld.gov.au)*

Dear Chair and Committee Members

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

I am a post-doctoral researcher in biological sciences at the University of Queensland. The reinstatement of the Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 is fundamental in protecting biodiversity in Queensland. The current rates of land clearing in Queensland are disastrous for preservation of remnant vegetation, emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>, land erosion and impact for the Great Barrier Reef. The reinstatement of the Bill is particularly important to protect remnant vegetation, and prevent broad scale clearing under the premise of high value agriculture.

While the reinstatement of the Bill will go some ways to protect biodiversity, I feel there are some areas where the legislation will not be strong enough to achieve all the aims set out by the Act. Below are some areas where I am concerned this legislation will not be strong enough to protect important areas of vegetation, and prevent further biodiversity loss.

-the bill needs to have stronger protection for high value regrowth. Furthermore, the definition of high value regrowth (currently defined as not cleared since 1989) needs to allow for the passage of time, so that regrowth gets protection as a function of its age and value, not based on some arbitrary date.

-thinning self-assessable codes provide a loophole that may allow land holders to clear vast tracks of land. The ability of land holders to change vegetation mapping, and the provision which allows the clearing of endangered ecosystems is a huge threat to protection of important remnant vegetation and threatened ecosystems. Vegetation mapping is a highly trained skill, and the ability of land holders to self-assess allows the potential for “honest mistakes” to lead to clearing of important areas for conservation.

-exemptions for land clearing need to be based on ecological impacts rather than purpose tests in order for the proper protection of ecosystems.

I support the reinstatement of the Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, and I hope that it the first step in creating strong environmental legislation which enables us to protect the rich natural areas that Queensland is so fortunate to still have.

Yours sincerely,

Pippa Kern

