

Date: 27th April 2016

Research Director
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Research Director:

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. The bill is critical in reinstating vital habitat protection measures that benefit the whole Queensland community and beyond.

I understand that there is considerable opposition to this proposed bill from the agricultural sector. Unfortunately I think that many agriculturalists are yet to fully understand the significant negative implications that go hand in hand with ecosystem clearing. Biodiversity and swathes of forest are essential in providing humans a suite of critical services such as clean air, clean water and medicines, as well as moderating our climate and rainfall. The more land that is cleared, the more CO₂ is released into the atmosphere and the more likely we are to experience changes in local and global climates, and more likely it is that rainfall will become less reliable. This of course all means that farmers will become victims of climate change, to an even greater degree than they are now, and will be less able to produce steady outputs, and therefore less able to generate steady incomes.

Land clearing is not only detrimental to the agricultural sector however; land clearing has enormous and irreparable impacts on wildlife and their habitat. Queensland is home to many endemic and iconic species and ecosystems that, without protective land clearing legislation, could easily become extinct. The koala and the Great Barrier Reef are two examples that immediately spring to mind, and will be afforded some protection at least, by the reinstatement of this bill.

Some of the reasons that I support this bill include:

- It removes the ability to get a permit to clear for so-called High Value Agriculture, and thus stops large-scale clearing or remnant woodland
- It restores protections for ecologically important regrowing woodlands ('High Value Regrowth') on freehold and Aboriginal lands
- Vitally, it restores protections for tress next to riverbanks (riparian areas) and extends provisions from some to all Great Barrier Reef catchments
- It removes the defence of claimed mistaken clearing and restore the starting presumption that a landholder is responsible for clearing that takes place on their property
- It makes much of the prospective legislation retrospective to 17 March, in an attempt to deter panic clearing and panic applications

Biodiversity is essential for all life, including humans. I am grateful that this bill goes some way to recognizing the importance of maintaining biodiversity through habitat protections. I sincerely hope that he bill is passed.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covers the signature area. A small blue mark is visible above the box, and a faint blue scribble is visible to the right of the box.

Bonny Cumming, BVSc (Hons I), MVS (Cons Med)
Veterinarian and Project Officer