

SUBMISSION TO:

**Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation
Amendment Bill 2016**

SUBMISSION COVER SHEET

Closing date for submissions is 29 April 2016.

Please complete and submit this form with your submission to:

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Research Director
Agriculture and Environment
Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Name:	Michelle Finger		
Telephone:	[REDACTED]		
Email address:	[REDACTED]		
Postal Address:	[REDACTED]		
Town:	Clermont	State: QLD	Postcode: 4721

Is all or part of your submission confidential?	No
If part, please identify which sections are confidential:	
Reason for confidentiality:	

SUBMISSION

I provide my submission in support of the continuation of the Current Vegetation Management Act 1999 and rejection of the changes proposed in the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 ("the Bill").

Thankyou for the opportunity to give a submission to this important issue.

I think that a lot of landholders, myself included, are reluctant to comment on this because of the technical and legal nature of it means that we are not entirely sure of the implications.

However, some things are clearly disturbing. The "reverse onus of proof" which makes farmers guilty until they prove their own innocence, and the proposal to introduce changes to law "retrospectively" so that people can be charged for acts that were not against the law at the time of their comital. These suggested amendments are so very Un-Australian that they attack the very heart of a civilised democracy. These proposals would set a dangerous precedent, are clearly unethical, and should not even be given consideration.

Also of concern is how this proposed legislation might interact with Free Hold land. If paying to convert ones' land to Free Hold status was done on the agreement at the time that the landholder now owns the trees ... the Government now has no right to back-flip on this agreement and take control over that which is privately owned. If the Government wish to regain control over trees on Free Hold land, then the only ethical course of action is to buy them back.

The constant changing of laws & maps is very confusing, laborious, and costly for farmers, most of whom are small business operators who do not have a dedicated office manager to keep track of it all. It is simply unfair and unreasonable to continue to layer such onerous administration requirements on to farm operations, and help should be provided to navigate the legal minefield that our paddocks have become and to understand, ground-truth, implement, and comply with any new vegetation legislation.

The constant changing of laws, maps, and terminologies, the proposal to introduce laws retrospectively, and the reversal of onus of proof is a disgusting blatant attack on landholders and can only be seen as deliberately trying to set them up to fail.

Apart from all of this, the intense focus on trees alone is nonsensical and distractive from the bigger issue of grassland and grazing management which has far more potential to mitigate climate change and run-off into the barrier reef.

This policy is all about playing politics and is not about serious environmental outcomes.

Thankyou for your time,

Signed:	Michelle Finger
Address:	██████████ Clermont, QLD 4721
Date:	28/4/2016