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

I welcome the amendments to the previous legislation which restore effective controls to achieve the agreed purpose of the act. The protection of vegetation is fundamental to the maintenance of biodiversity; the protection of all wildlife including rare, endangered and iconic species; the prevention of land degradation; the protection of catchments, coastline and marine environments including the Great Barrier Reef and a reduction in GHG emissions.

Under the previous legislation there was a resurgence in broadscale clearing which saw 40,000 ha of koala habitat cleared, over 200,000 ha of habitat for over 200 threatened species without mitigation or offsets. The negative impact of these actions can also have long term negative impacts on agriculture given that research indicates a correlation between loss of tree cover and regional drought incidence and severity.

Although the proposed legislation achieves much in restoring vegetation protection, reinstating prosecution powers and closing loopholes it does not totally eliminate the loopholes of self assessable codes, exemptions and PMAVX exemptions plus its static baseline HVR definition of 1989 requires review.

I commend the government for the introduction of this reform.

Sincerely,

Kerry O'Carroll

24 April 2016