

SUBMISSION TO:**Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation
Amendment Bill 2016****SUBMISSION COVER SHEET****Closing date for submissions is 25 April 2016.**

Please complete and submit this form with your submission to:

Email:
vminquiry@parliament.qld.gov.au**Post:** **Fax:** 07 3553 6699Research Director
Agriculture and Environment
Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000**Organisation or individual:** R.V + N.E. Woods.**Principal contact:** Nancy.**Position:** partner**Telephone:** [REDACTED]**Mobile:** [REDACTED]**Email address:** [REDACTED]**Street address:** [REDACTED]**Suburb/City:** Cooktown **State:** QLD **Postcode:** 4895**Postal address:** [REDACTED]**Suburb/City:** Cooktown **State:** QLD **Postcode:** 4895**Is all or part of your submission confidential?** Yes, all ☐ Yes, part ☐ No ☒ ☒ (copy box to indicate answer)**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").

My overriding issue with the Bill is that its introduction in the Queensland Parliament on 17th March represents **yet another** variation to the Vegetation Management Framework, which has been amended over 18 times since its introduction in 1999. This constant change in legislation severely impacts on the ability of farm managers to plan and implement effective long-term property and business management decisions. Ecological processes work in much longer timeframes and can be severely compromised when mismatching regulations are enforced. Farmers have long called for certainty with the vegetation management regulatory framework. With the Bill being introduced when farmers are on their knees with over 86% of Queensland in drought conditions, it should come as no surprise that I am totally opposed to continued uncertainty and attacks on the viability of myself, the long-term sustainability of my business as well as attacks on fellow farmers.

We have been on our farm for 58 years and are second generation farmers and this has led us to the following observations that we have rapid growth of regrowth and weeds it will become impossible to maintain our presents pastures and our native pastures will cease to exist causing erosion under the trees.

In our area the timber grows that thick and fast that it uses all the ground water and if we get a dry spell the timber will die and cause major fires which results in more runoff and erosion.

1. Removing High Value Agriculture and Irrigated High Value Agriculture from the Vegetation Management Framework

Background

HVA and IHVA permits provide farmers in northern Queensland with the opportunity to grow fodder and grain for supplementing in the dry season and finishing off stock for market.

The removal of HVA and IHVA is in direct conflict with the Australian Government White Paper on the Development of Northern Australia. The Changes to the Vegetation Management Framework will prevent indigenous and non-indigenous land holders from developing agriculture projects.

***B.** We have more areas of land suitable for providing fodder and grain that we will be unable to use if this act comes into play. How do we feed families of the future and ourselves if we are not allowed to use our land sustainably.

2. Re-introducing Reverse Onus-of-Proof

Background

The inclusion of Reverse Onus of Proof in Queensland Government's Vegetation Management Framework is a direct affront to the rights and liberties of farmers. Reverse Onus relegates farmers clearing vegetation to a level below that of criminals, where they are denied common justice under Section 24 of the Criminal Code: Mistake of fact. In Queensland farmers will be presumed guilty until they are proven innocent. They are also refused the defence in making a mistake, despite known faults with the mapping layers.

*C. Farmers should have the same rights as all other citizens innocent until proven guilty.

3. Including High Value Regrowth as an additional layer of regulation under the Vegetation Management Framework on leasehold, freehold and indigenous land

Background

The re-inclusion of High Value Regrowth (HVR) as an additional layer of regulation on leasehold, freehold and indigenous land is an overt grab by Queensland Government in search of targets for meeting international treaties such as the Kyoto Protocol and more recently the 2015 Paris Climate Deal.

*E. What is high Value Regrowth?
Nobody has told us what is high Value Regrowth and all regrowth grows too thick in our area and would have to be thinned to be of any value.

4. Increasing Category R vegetation to include the Burdekin, Mackay, Whitsunday and Wet Tropics Great Barrier Reef catchments and additional catchments Burnett Mary, Eastern Cape York and Fitzroy.

Background

This increase in Category R provisions is a further restriction on development in Northern Queensland, which is in stark contrast to the development imperatives contained with the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia.

The science is completely unproven on the necessity to include ≥ 50 metre buffers along streamlines. In fact, a study conducted in Queensland and published in 2016 shows that grass is a far better assimilator for nitrogen to prevent leaching into waterways. The current bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef is not caused by high nutrient runoff from agricultural lands.

*F. It won't matter how far off the creeks + river the buffer zone is if you have all trees and no ground cover you will have erosion.

5. Other matters relevant to the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 that the review committee should consider appropriate and worth some consideration

*G. Stop trying to burden the North with solving your problems from down south. Solve them down south where they are most prevalent.
i.e. cities.

Signed:		
Address:		Cooktown Qld 4895.
Date:	18.4.2016.	