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Research Director
Agriculture & Environment Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE Q 4000

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Dear Research Director and Committee,

I am writing this submission out of concern for the future farming on my property and other farming communities.

I have downloaded the latest vegetation mapping for my property. I am very concerned if the new amended laws that might be introduced will affect my farming. I will not be able to sustain my farm if these new tree clearing laws are passed. Also some of the proposed mapping areas are incorrect within the watercourse areas.

I do have concerns with the introduction of categories R and C. If the new tree clearing laws get introduced onto my property, my farm will become unsustainable in the future. The introduction of the Burnett Mary catchment area has affected a lot of farming areas. With R and C categories our cattle property will devalue.

The proposed new law will not allow us to sustain a good quantity of water supply in the future and we will lose farming land. We will not be able to sustain the same amount of stock on our property as the regrowth or woody weeds will take over our farming land. In return our farm will be devalued and we will not be able to keep our farming property in the future. At the moment the areas marked in categories C and R have vegetation in these areas because of our farming practices. If we did not control the vegetation and implement improvements on our land, these areas would be in poor quality and badly eroded.

In the last six years our major watercourse has been horrendously damaged by the floods. We have had to reconstruct parts of this watercourse to prevent any eroding in the future. With the new proposed tree clearing laws we would have to leave it the way it is. This will cause more erosion problems as our soil erodes very easily. We try to manage the erosion to prevent major problems on our property and further downstream. Eventually our eroded soil will end up in the reef areas if we do not control this erosion.

Massive habitat trees and about 10% of the trees and vegetation on our major watercourse banks were washed away in 2010/11 flood. One area of our watercourses was reconstructed after 2011. After the 2013 flood about 15% of the existing trees and vegetation were destroyed. Where the reconstruction of the watercourse was done there was minimal damage. This has been duplicated in the 2015 flood. The understanding of how to control erosion is not having trees only. Reconstructing with machines and then allowing the natural vegetation to cover the area is the better option. If we had left the badly eroded areas in this watercourse the major floods would have caused major erosion in other areas and more loss.

of vegetation and eventually damaging the reef dramatically. We are trying to prevent this erosion in this particular watercourse. At the moment the way we are managing our property, the reef will not be affected. We do not want our soils to be eroded away downstream. If the new laws are implemented then the reef will be badly damaged from these watercourses continuing to erode.

We want to preserve this major watercourse but under the new proposed amended laws we will not be able to preserve any of these parts. So in the future this watercourse will become a concern for the environment. The banks on this watercourse will become badly eroded. When we encounter another flood, these soils will be washed away into our major river way causing an ecological problem further down. Our farming practice is better for the environment if we are allowed to keep this management in place.

Also with the category R on our farm, we will not be able to build or do repairs to any dams. We were hoping to have a big enough supply of water for our stock for any droughts that we might encounter in the future. We would like to have a good supply of water on our farm to last approximately 5 years. If we have to do repairs to our dams due to flood damage or clean the silt out and make them bigger, we will not be able to do these repairs to our dams under the new categories.

These dams are not stopping the supply to the Burnett Mary Catchment area. When we have torrential rain or flooding, these dams can only hold a certain amount of water then bywash down the watercourses. The dams are better for the environment because they stop a lot of the sediments flowing into these waterways.

The remnant vegetation on our property at the moment is working well with us under the self-assessment. We abide by the laws that are in place and we are happy with these laws. We understand the code and it works on our property. With these laws in place the property is sustainable. We understand that certain trees or vegetation has to be left and this is good for the environment. We don't believe in tearing down all the vegetation on our farm because it will work against us. It is not worth the effort and it would be a costly exercise. With the new amended laws we lose approximately half our working farm. When the tree clearing laws were first introduced our farm was still sustainable back then. This time round more of our prime country has been locked up. The new laws are not similar to the first vegetation laws when introduced into Queensland years ago. This is unfair to us and other farmers.

Certain vegetation does cause problem on our property so we have to control this vegetation. Certain trees cause massive erosion problems as our soil gets washed if there are too many trees in certain areas. So we maintain a balance of trees, grasses and certain vegetation to prevent this problem occurring in the future. To achieve this balance we use machinery, leave a certain amount of trees, replant grasses and spell the paddocks. If we don't prevent this problem, then the torrential rains or flooding rains, washes the soil away into our major creek then into the major river. This will cause an environment disaster if we are not allowed to maintain a suitable farming management of our property.

If we are unable to control certain vegetation there will be a bigger environmental disaster. We will have certain vegetation taking over prime farm land making areas unfeasible. We have witnessed a massive vegetation problem since our farm has encountered massive floods over the last six years. The regrowth of trees and woody weeds on our farm is at its highest in almost 30 years. We also had the problem of noxious weeds entering our farm through the floods. With this burden it is very hard to control but we are trying to control the problem. Under the new proposals, the regrowth vegetation and noxious weeds will become uncontrollable in areas that are under R category. This will cause devastation in the Burnett Mary catchment.

Our property is managed correctly at this present time. With the proposed tree clearing amendments it will disadvantage us. It will cause problems with our farming production in the future. We would have to

look at selling our farm at a reduced value or destocking. We will not be able to sustain the same farming production in the future. Our involvement in the agriculture area is looking grim at this moment.

I do feel cheated by the Government at the moment. People who are living in major centres like Brisbane, Gold Coast or the Sunshine Coast; they do not understand our concerns. If our primary producers stop producing, how will these people survive? We produce for the people not for ourselves. Green groups always say the primary producers are the cause of global warming and destroying the Great Barrier Reef. At the moment the media or the scientists have not said how much poisons are sprayed onto lawns or tipped down drains in these suburbs or major towns in Queensland? This poison is washed down the streets in the major river ways but nothing is said. If a farmer does something like that the media is straight on to it.

If the population of Brisbane is currently 2.2 million and if everyone uses at least 1 litre of poison, that's 2.2 million litre of poison being emptied into the Brisbane River. This is not classed as a problem. I have never heard of this in the media or spread across the papers. They say the river is unhealthy but never say why.

I have concerns about the survival of our small rural towns in the future. Some of these small towns rely on the farming sector. If the young generation is leaving because the farming is going to become harder to manage or there is going to be obstacles in their farming practice, then they will not take over the farms in the future. We are seeing this now. It will become more common. The younger generation don't want the burden and the families will not want to pass the burden onto their children either. I know I don't want my children to have the same burden as I have at the moment.

I do hope some common sense prevails in these amended laws. I would like more investigation from the government. Approaching primary producers who will be affected by these laws and hearing there concerns would have been better approach first. Listening only to the scientists or conservational groups is not the only approach to this problem.

As a primary producer, living in a rural area of Queensland, my husband and I thought our contribution to Queensland would have been respected. Our lively hood will be impacted and we will have to find another avenue of income if these new laws are introduced. In our area, finding another avenue of income is very hard. Our farm is cattle producing country. Trying another farming technique on our farm will be costly. We can only produce a certain number of cattle on our farm at the moment. This number will be reduced by near half if the news laws are passed. This will be a drain on our pockets.

I do hope the new vegetation laws are not passed and the present laws are maintained now and in the future. The present laws are working well and farmers are working within the laws.

Yours faithfully
Sandra Hendren