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Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Submission to The Inquiry into the Queensland land clearing reform Bill

I would like to express my strong support for the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016.

I have been deeply concerned that high levels of damaging and unsustainable land clearing have returned to Queensland in recent years following the previous LNP government's overturning of legitimate and sensible land clearing controls put in place by an earlier government.

As a resident of Cairns I am very aware of how state wide legislation impacts on far north Queensland in particular.

I was very disturbed by the operation of the current land clearing legislation as it was applied to the Olivevale pastoral property, near Laura in Cape York Peninsula. The current land clearing legislation in Queensland has provided a permit for the leaseholder to clear a large area, over 30,000 Ha that will directly negatively impact :

- Wetlands of National Significance (both on Olivevale itself and on Lakefield National Park).
- Threatened species habitat for a range of species including the Red Goshawk, Buff-Breasted Button-Quail, the Northern Quoll and other species.
- The water quality and sediment level of runoff that will drain into the near coastal Great Barrier Reef lagoon.
- Potential National Heritage and World Heritage values of Cape York Peninsula which include the ecological diversity and the high level of integrity of its savanna landscapes.

Each of these three issues should also have triggered the Commonwealth government's EPBC Act to respond, but they did not. A belated response by the Commonwealth is now in play, but only after NGO organisations and media focus pressured the Commonwealth government to act. This is a totally unacceptable breakdown in environmental protection that must not be allowed to become a permanent fixture of the legislative framework in Queensland.

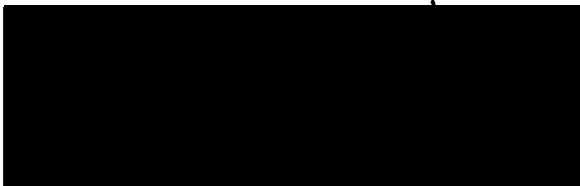
Land clearing in Queensland, based on the rapid increase of recent years, also has the capacity to seriously set back Australia's ability to achieve its international agreed carbon emission targets. It seems a futile exercise on the one hand to set national targets for carbon emissions, which come at a cost to the national economy, and then also to allow high emissions producing land clearing for low value or marginal agricultural outcomes on the other.

It is without doubt that proposed cropping on Olivevale fails to qualify as high value agriculture, as was stated in the original land clearing permit. Producing fodder for cattle, and/or experimenting with dryland cropping both fail to justify the high level of environmental damage that would occur if proposed clearing was to continue.

As a case study the example of land clearing on Olivevale can be extended further across Queensland, where high levels of damage from potential land clearing are an ongoing and unacceptable threat to many environmental values. The Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, will very largely address all of these issues.

I submit that the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 be supported and enacted in legislation.

Yours sincerely



Kerry Trapnell