

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:

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Agriculture and Environment
Committee
Parliament House
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submission confidential?**Yes, all ☐Yes, part ☐No ☒☒ (copy box to indicate answer)**If part, please identify
which sections are
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SUBMISSION

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

Queensland agriculture is thoroughly fed up with changes to vegetation management laws, particularly when the changes are politically motivated and not based on good science, as this Bill certainly is not (SLATS data cherry picked to suit the politics of the day).

Until

- **there is a recognition by Government that sustainable agricultural production systems need to manage vegetation;**
- **it is recognised by Government that farmers need to make sufficient returns to take care of the environment – *"the best environmentalists are well healed cockies"*;**
- **Governments adopt a landscape approach to vegetation management to replace a tree by tree approach;**
- **it is recognised by Government that the landscape is no longer the same landscape that greeted Captain Cook in 1770;**
- **it is recognised by Government that the VMA 1999 is an anti-tree clearing Act and not a vegetation management Act,**

farmers will remain threatened and frustrated in their attempts to maintain viable enterprises, never mind growing their business to provide food and fibre, employment, regional prosperity and succession planning for future generations.

In providing this submission I refer directly to the key provisions of the legislation which the 2016 Bill intends to amend.

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| 1. Removing High Value Agriculture and Irrigated High Value Agriculture from the Vegetation Management Framework |
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| As far as development across Northern Australia is concerned the March 17th Amendment Bill will take Queensland back to the age of dinosaurs compared to the Northern Territory and Western Australia. Is the Bill the best our legislators can do to promote the Northern Australia Development White Paper ? |
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| High Value Agriculture and Irrigated High Value Agriculture is an opportunity to responsibly grow economic prosperity through expansion of the agricultural sector; to provide regional employment, and in North Queensland grow indigenous employment . Here is an opportunity to develop land, a mere fraction of the total area of Queensland, in a modern, planned and sustainable way. |
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| This amendment Bill, if passed, will negate the chance for farmers to add value to their production, and will negate the opportunity to better cope with droughts. How much sense it is |
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to grow crops locally to market, or to feed into the cattle finishing business, and to not have to have the Government pay a freight subsidy on hay in drought because it is grown in the local region.

2. Re-introducing Reverse Onus-of-Proof

This is an absolute affront to a farmers' dignity. It is insulting that all farmers are demonised for the transgressions of a very, very few (see latest audit results).

It is totally unnecessary now that DNRM has the Early Detection System working.

It is absolute rubbish that unlawful clearing often occurs in remote areas (Bill Explanatory Notes page 5). With satellite surveillance there are no *remote areas*.

3. That no compensation will be payable to HVA, IHVA and Property Map of Assessable Vegetation (PMAV) applicants during transitional arrangements

HVA and IHVA applications cost a lot of money to get up to the *properly made* stage. To have an applicant's future business growth cut off by this regressive legislation (the Amendment Bill) is deserving of compensation. Instead of stopping HVA/IHVA the government should be looking for better ways of ensuring both agricultural development, with all its economic and social flow on benefits, and environmental protection are nurtured hand in hand.

Farmers should be compensated for a very rash pre-election promise made to secure votes from those who do not bear the social and economic cost of the policies they advocate.

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

Landholders have paid the State good money to freehold land, with the totally reasonable expectation that Cat C HVR would not apply on that land. This is a case for compensation for production loss and land value decline. There are a host of reasons why land cleared prior to December, 1989, had not been re-cleared. To retain previously cleared land does not necessarily enhance the environment, nor is it likely to enhance farm productivity.

5. 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.

As I am not aware of the proof that the imposition of Cat R vegetation restrictions in the Burdekin, Mackay/Whitsunday and Wet Tropics GBR catchments has reduced sediment and chemical runoff, I see no reason to impose the same restrictions in the Burnett-Mary, Eastern Cape York and Fitzroy catchments. This is especially so as there is no science to prove a 50m vegetation buffer is more beneficial to the GBR than a 50m ground cover buffer for filtering sediments. In fact where is the science to prove a 50m vegetation buffer is the best protection for the GBR ?

The loss of income from the inability to use land placed under Category R restrictions means farmers will be less able to manage their land to minimize or eliminate harm to the GBR.

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| Signed: | J. H. te Kloot |
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| Date: | 28/4/2016 |