

Bronwynne Barnes

[REDACTED]  
Foreshores, Qld 4678

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Research Director  
Agriculture and Environment Committee  
Parliament House  
George St  
Brisbane, QLD, 4000

Dear Research Director:

This is my Submission to the Agriculture and Environment Committee regarding the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other legislation Amendment Bill 2016 currently before your committee for review.

My husband & I have a property on [REDACTED] Foreshores, Qld, 4678. We purchased this 850 acre property 9 years ago with the view of breeding cattle after selling our farm in South Australia. The property had some approved clearing previous but not a locked in PMAV. We looked into getting a PMAV for the property which was much more complicated than pay your fee and it arrives in the post as referred by Mr Nicholas

The paragraphs below extracted from the transcript of the AEC 22 March 2016

*CHAIR: One would say that most landholders would have access to a PMAV. If they want to they can add category X. If I buy a property and I pull down the PMAV and I get an understanding that what is on the map is not quite what is on my property and I want to put in more category X, is that doable through that same process?*

*Mr Nicholas: Yes. They need to make a simple application to the department. They can apply to lock in that PMAV. It is a very straightforward process for us. No detailed investigation is required. They will get their PMAV back from the department within a very short period of time.*

I can't remember everything we needed to supply but we did have to buy a GPS to give DNRM any coordinates they required, mapping, photos etc. I had to drive to Rockhampton to meet with the department with my evidence to be assessed and try to rectify some incorrect mapping. I was informed that sometimes their boundaries are not quite right and it would be another expense and more paper work to change it and it would be dragged out even longer if I wanted to dispute their maps. This is even though I had supplied photos and GPS coordinates to show the land was clear. It always appeared the onus was on us to prove they had made a mistake in their mapping

or categorising and to have an officer come to your property to check it was another expense. It was all too hard I was just happy to have a PMAV.

On top of this the Vegetation Management (Regrowth Clearing Moratorium) Act 2009 was legislated which meant it took 12 months before we had a PMAV as no PMAVs were being approved while the moratorium was on and we were not allowed to touch a tree on our property not even suckers and regrowth in the areas that had been cleared previously. Of course this meant we were left with a lot of regrowth which takes no time to grow in our climate and left us chasing our tails to get back to where we were before the moratorium by the time we had a PMAV.

The paragraphs below extracted from the transcript of the AEC 22 March 2016

*(This bill also proposes to re-regulate high-value regrowth on freehold and Indigenous land. This area will be identified as category C on the regulated vegetation map. The bill proposes that the existing category C self-assessable vegetation clearing code will be extended to apply to clearing on freehold and Indigenous land. However, the new provisions will not apply to areas that are currently mapped as category X on PMAVs.)*

*(The bill will also broaden the existing regulation of vegetation along the Great Barrier Reef watercourses by regulating native vegetation within 50 metres of mapped watercourses and drainage lines in three additional reef catchments of Burnett Mary, the eastern Cape York and the Fitzroy. It is the intention that the existing category R regrowth self-assessable vegetation clearing code will apply in these areas and allow limited and low-impact clearing of vegetation in line with predetermined conditions. However, the new provisions will not apply to areas that are currently mapped under the category X of the PMAV.)*

I have down loaded the latest DNRM report and maps for our property & see that even though we have a PMAV with locked in category X the Proposed Regulated Vegetation Management Map has reduced some areas of category X and have made those areas category C and some spots of category R. This not what is stated above in Ms Ryan's opening address?

The PMAVs are not easy to understand and do not have GPS points on them. Every time we go to do anything on the property we get the maps out and study them but still become confused about exactly where an area is zoned and end up leaving another buffer in fear of getting it wrong but with the proposal to again remove the 'mistake of fact' (s.24 of the Criminal Code) as a defence for a vegetation clearing offence we will probably not be game enough to do anything.

We are not looking to clear our property we are looking to be able to manage our asset and our future. We have invested time and money into our farm with improvements to make the cleared land more viable with planting new pastures, fencing, good dams and watering points and other improvements. We actually purchased our property knowing we have some areas that we would never plan to clear as we wanted to enjoy the diversity that we have in our block of land but need to know that we will be able to make decisions which is best for our property's farming future.

Research Director

27/4/16

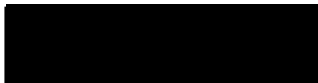
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We have a creek through our property and in 2012 we worked alongside Burnett Mary Regional Group to fence along this creek to improve ground cover in the area adjacent to the creek and reduce sediment loss from our property. We have fenced our cattle out of the creek; we installed new watering points in the form of troughs and poly pipe fed by a tank and pump. We have in a sense given up 23ha of land to do our bit to protect the reef, the waterways and riparian zones with the view that we are here to do the best with our land for future generations. This was a cost of \$12,000 to us.

Last year we purchased 500 acres neighbouring us to make our business more viable and so we can manage more cattle over time. Now if we farmers did not care about our land and how we manage it we would not have got into more debt for more land we would have just applied to knock down as much scrub as we could while it was apparently so easy!

We have invested over \$1,000,000 in the land as well as improvements and blood sweat and tears and if this legislation does go through I well believe our property will drop in value significantly due to the loss of the rights of the landowner to control what they do with their land. I am deeply concerned for our future.

Sincerely,



Bronwynne Barnes

