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29 April 2016

Research Director
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000
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Dear Chair and Committee Members

Submission to Committee on Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016

Thank you for providing me and other concerned community citizens an opportunity to have previous legislation reinstated / restored updated and perhaps even improved to protect remaining areas of standing vegetation.

I am concerned that large broadscale clearing of vegetation for both agriculture and urban development destroys the natural values of the land and its contribution to a functioning ecosystem. Plant are removed, animal species are displaced or destroyed and the earth itself - the soil - is left bare vulnerable and prone to erosion by wind or water. In addition any infrastructure built to support agriculture / grazing, urban development and mining causes further degradation.

From my own past local experience extensive removal of trees in the upper catchment meant that the velocity of the overland water flow increased and the fragile soil structure with dispersible clays increased the rate of erosion and sediment created was gradually washed into the Logan River system and eventually into Moreton Bay - a Ramsar site. Western Logan is faced with thousands of hectares cleared and being cleared for urban development with the current practice of terraforming the landscape.

In northern Queensland erosion into river catchments eventually reaches the marine environment of the Great Barrier Reef.

Our earth systems are interconnected in ways that are understood by scientists who now agree that our human endeavours - including broadscale clearing and removal of trees is a contributing factor to climate change which in turn is impacting the oceans' temperature and our Great Barrier Reef.

It is assumed that the intended activity - grazing farming or urban development has a greater value than that of the uncleared forested land with its wildlife and its functioning ecosystems.

While I am concerned about longterm survival of all wildlife our vulnerable koala populations are in decline from disease and deaths on roads. Loss of habitat, landscapes dissected by roads for human movement without consideration of any species living there - including the vulnerable koala - can not be considered ecological sustainable development.

My 6 hectare property in a rural residential land use area has been a Land for Wildlife property since 1999 and recently a registered state government Nature Refuge. There are 4000 properties and 6000 owners participating in the voluntary Land for Wildlife scheme.

There are also many farmers who retain habitat / vegetation cover as part of their regenerative holistic farming management systems. Such farmers should be acknowledged and these practices extended rather than the outdated exploitive practices that clear fell their land.

I commend the government for introducing the Bill and recommend that it be passed. The inclusion of the retrospective clause from 17 March is an excellent strategy to reduce unwanted panic clearing.

Other aspects I concur with are the protection of remnant forests / woodlands from the guise of high value agriculture , the restoration of protection for high value regrowth, and the protection of riparian vegetation which should be applied to all river systems in all catchments.

Clearly placing ownership / responsibility for clearing with the landholder is also an important feature.

Where regrowth has occurred - whether it be listed as high value or not - it has immeasurable value as part of an ecosystem supporting local wildlife species - and should have an increased level of protection

The Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 is an important step forward to greater understanding of ecological sustainable development.

Heath of koalas and Great Barrier Reef and climate change impacts are all hinged on this bill being successful.

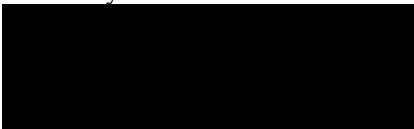
I wish the government success in having this legislation passed.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Faldt

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Kathy Faldt

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