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Parliament House
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RE: *The Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016*

To Whom It May Concern,

I fully support the return of legislation to protect native remnant vegetation and advanced regrowth as was the case with the Vegetation Management Act, prior to modifications made by the previous State Government. I think there is clear evidence that the current VMA is not adequately protecting native vegetation in Queensland.

I understand that land clearing has significantly increased in Queensland since the changes were introduced in 2010. I have seen many areas that have undergone broadscale clearing that are unlikely to ever fulfil the purpose of "high value agriculture".

I think broadscale clearing should be stopped in Queensland because:

1. It is likely to be a major cause of continuing decline of many native species, including many threatened species. Iconic species such as black-throated finches, golden-shouldered parrots and red goshawks will suffer reduced total habitat areas if broad scale clearing is allowed to continue.
2. It makes a mockery of the Commonwealth Government's 20 million trees target (which is itself a pathetically unambitious target, at less than 1 tree per Australian). Whether the purpose of the tree planting is to mitigate carbon emissions, or to prevent runoff, or to enhance biodiversity values, or all of these, much greater gains can be had by maintaining existing native woodland and forest cover: prevention is better than cure.
3. It could potentially threaten as yet unknown species. Queensland has had a significant number of new species described in the last decade, and this is likely to continue. I think that broadscale clearing could, in some locations, potentially threaten species that we do not even know exist yet.
4. In Queensland, in particular, it threatens the future of the Great Barrier Reef directly through increased runoff and indirectly through increased CO₂ emissions.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Bill and I urge The Committee to use the powers vested within it to help stop broadscale tree clearing in Queensland.

Yours Faithfully,

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Eric Vanderduys