

Gamarard Consulting

EARLVILLE QLD 4870

Dear Hon members,

Proposed Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) Amendment Bill

We understand that that the QLD Parliament recently agreed to refer to the Committee the above Bill.

Gamarard Consulting is a small for profit company that is 100% Aboriginal owned based in FNQ.

Please find attached, our submission to this proposed Bill. We have very serious reservations about the impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land owners and entrepreneurs, based on a number of factors.

1. The lack of consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities who represent a significant landowners group within Northern Qld; and
2. At a time when the amount of land being returned to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the past ten years and into the future, the potential that this legislation will impact negatively on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' aspiration to develop enterprises to create wealth including high value agriculture on their lands without undue red tape from Government.

Please do not hesitate to contact me

Kind regards,

Anthony Penrith
Managing Director
29th April 2016



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Submission to Proposed Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) Amendment Bill

Gamarard Consulting would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to make a submission on the above Bill. We are an 100% Aboriginal owned company based in FNQ. The directors of the company have had over 50 years combined work experience in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of Cape York,, Gulf and Torres Strait. These communities are marked by their low social economic status, dependence of government grants and welfare, and other historical issues related to dispossession.

Our submission contends that:

- 1. The lack of consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities who represent a significant landowners group within Northern Qld in a gross flaw in the development of this proposed Bill;**

According to the public briefing held by the Committee on 22 March 2016, we have noted that there appears to be no consultation held with any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders as part of the “limited” consultation on the proposed Bill. We contend that this is gross flaw of this proposed Bill, particularly when a significant and growing stakeholder group within our Qld community has not been consulted which will dramatically affect the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander landowners.

In recent years, with more and more Native Title determinations and Government initiatives such as the Indigenous Land Corporation’s buy back of pastoral lands and handback of lands by the Qld State Government on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners, more and more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are now becoming recognised as landowners in their own right. During this same time period, many Traditional Owner groups along with bodies such as Native Title Representative Bodies are coming to terms with the fact that they are now landowners and are grappling with the issues of managing their lands, including creating wealth and prosperity for their people with the resources now being accessed, instead of having to rely on government handouts/grants to manage their land, such as Caring for Country grants.

Also Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders have a long history in the agricultural industry, with many cattle stations of the north having drafted many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as drovers, cooks, ringers etc.

At a time when many newly created Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander land owners are being recognised, we submit that many of these groups, due to the relative “newness” of their land owners status, have not yet come to terms with how they might manage their lands. Many groups look to preserving culture and protection, but we believe that many groups are also now seeking to develop parts of their land for growing high value agriculture, or other economic ventures.

As such, for the Government not to consult extensively with this growing community Stakeholder group, will stymie the economic participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander Queenslanders, well in the future. At a time when the Commonwealth Government has a strategy to develop Northern Australia and looking for ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders can participate in this strategy, This proposed Bill works to disempower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander landowners of an ability to determine how they manage their lands.

Recommendation:

We urge the Committee to delay this Bill until there has been consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander landowners or their representatives, so that an informed debate and submissions from interested Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders can be tabled. We envisage that a suitable timeframe to enable this consultation should be twelve months. This consultation should be led by Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP), with appropriate representation from other relevant agencies.

To not allow for this consultation, will disempower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and disadvantage them well into the future.