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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 28 June 2021 12:01 PM
To: Health and Environment Committee
Subject: Environmental and Other Legislation (Reversal of Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures)Amendment Bill 2021
Attachments: REEF PARLIAMENTARY SUBMISSION.docx
Categories: Submission

Attached is a submission to the above committee

The submission is in response to concerns expressed at a capacity consultation meeting by OGBR in February 2021 at Kingaroy, and echoed at follow up meetings on the 2nd and 22 June 2021 at the same location.

At the meeting on the 2nd June OGBR staff were also accompanied by water quality scientists who failed to convince attendees that the area contributed to water quality issues on the reef.

While no producer wants to lose topsoil from their property or cause any issues to the reef it is considered the regulations imposed and those foreshadowed are out of all proportion to any risk ,and will have devastating effects on the South Burnett area.

Regards
Alan Broome

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PARLIAMENTARY SUBMISSION

The Environmental and Other Legislation (Reversal of Great Barrier reef Protection Measures) Amendment Bill 2021 is supported.

Questionable Science

The South Burnett and likely other areas should not be subject to the Reef Regulations for the following reasons :-

Despite claims of contributing sediment scientists have recently confirmed **no** baseline data has been established, and no water quality testing has been undertaken in the South Burnett area, the only monitoring station being located at Mount Lawless North East of Gayndah. The inclusion of the South Burnett is justified by modelling, for which scientists acknowledge there has been no ground truthing undertaken.

There are multiple cross stream structures between the South Burnett ,the monitoring station and the subsequent river mouth , which are acknowledged by scientists to trap sediment.

Much of the South Burnett incorporates contour banks and grassed waterways installed by farmers in the 1940's to protect valuable top-soils and reduce run-off.

The South Burnett has been included because of the claimed contribution of the Burnett-Mary catchment to sediment on the seagrass and mangrove areas on the near coast. If that is the case why don't the restrictions also extend to the Brisbane River Catchment which has its origins in the same district and empties into an important seagrass area.

Nature has moved soil through the catchments for millions of years with many of our most productive food bowls the result. Scientists claim the main contributor to sediment in the catchment is bank erosion. If that is the case then natural events such as the recent 2013 floods over which producers have no control could be considered to be the main contributor.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REASONS SOUTH BURNETT SHOULD BE EXCLUDED

A large number of properties have been opportunity cropped for generations to remain viable, but the floods of 2010 and 2013 along with continuing drought since have meant the cropping history test to continue the practice cannot easily be met. The transitional arrangements for cropping from 1 June 2018 to 31 May 2021 to meet the cropping history test have also been periods of constant drought. Producers who have not removed ground cover when weather conditions would have made replacement cropping difficult will be penalised by these regulations.

The imposition of paid permit requirements and Environmentally Regulated Activities to commercial cropping (Crops for sale) will compromise good environmental crop rotation practices, and place an unjust financial burden on producers already facing difficult circumstances. This is particularly relevant in the South Burnett where largely dryland production is undertaken on properties which because of their limited size will be adversely affected by some of the regulations .

Adjoining properties will be subject to widely varying valuations and sale prospects with one subject to permits and ERA restrictions, while the other is unaffected. There has been no compensation for the restrictions on land use, and resultant decrease in value. Additionally the unimproved valuation of the land based on highest and best use could be affected with resultant reductions in local government rate revenues.

The regulations are based around cropping for profit but will also affect a producer who wants to sell excessive pasture hay when there has been no disturbance of the soil.

Producers throughout the state have been overwhelmed by regulations and restrictions many of which are contradictory. Many are finding it difficult to cope both financially and emotionally, and recent figures have worryingly identified this area as having mental health and self- harm issues some ten times the Australian average.