



Invicta Cane Growers Organisation Ltd

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15 March 2019

A/Committee Secretary
Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Attention: Erin Jameson, Acting Committee Secretary; itdec@parliament.qld.gov.au

Re: Submission: Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019

The Invicta Cane Growers Organisation (ICGO) is seeking an opportunity to participate in further consultation in relation to the amendment of the Environmental Protection Act under this current amendment bill. Our organisation is one peak body that represents cane growers in the Burdekin Haughton region. This region is one of the largest cane producing areas in Queensland and as a result will be widely impacted by any changes to legislation.

The ICGO hold significant concerns over a number of factors within the legislation. While we seek the opportunity to provide a more detailed submission as part of this process these issues relate to imposing significant fines and penalties on growers in this region to meet water quality discharge standards. A number of factors impact on the discharge of water from cane farms in this region and further clarification and parameters is sought in relation to how penalties will be applied and the quality of water discharge measured to determine where contaminants have originated from.

Cane growers in this region have recently experienced significant hardships. This has included a major flooding and inundation event in February 2019 along with other environmental factors. Pressures are also experienced from a current price review on water supply by SunWater which leaves growers vulnerable to additional costs and lower profitability. The application of this legislation as stated will result in a significant cost to growers to achieve compliance. ICGO has concerns the standards required to achieve compliance will be applied in a blanket approach that will require new infrastructure for growers that may not be close to natural water ways.

The ICGO has significant concerns over the mental health and well-being of farmers in this region. There is a potential adverse impact of a strict law or regulation that requires full compliance for cane growers that are already being exposed to significant hardship and other pressures. ICGO encourages the holding of a public forum, preferably in this region to gather feedback from growers that will be directly impacted. We also seek an opportunity to participate public hearings or consultation and are willing to work with Government to achieve realistic solutions.



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As an organisation we are seeking to engage with the committee and provide detailed feedback on the implementation of this legislation and potential impact on cane growers in this region. As a large supplier of sugar cane any changes to agricultural regulations that impact on the cost of doing business can adversely affect this industry. The ICGO appreciates that the Queensland Government is seeking to improve environmental factors that impact on the reef. As an organisation we are willing to work with the Government to develop realistic approaches towards a partnership based model that will encourage participation by cane growers in compliance with expected standards. As expected cane growers throughout this region also have an interest in maintaining the environmental health of all coastal land and marine areas.

The Invicta Cane Growers Organisation formally requests an opportunity to provide a more detailed submission in relation to potential impact of this legislation to the committee. We submit this initial expression of interest within the expected deadline and seek to prepare a more detailed analysis of this issue. We appreciate this opportunity and look forward to working with the committee to develop appropriate recommendations to the Queensland Government.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Kern
Manager

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Enrico Mio
Chairman

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