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15th March 2019

Acting Committee Secretary
Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE Q. 4000

Dear Secretary,

Re: Reef Catchment

As a family owned beef business I am very concerned about the proposed changes to land management in regard to reef catchments.

I do want the reef to function but I also want my family business to function.

I did not know this proposal was before parliament until I had an e-mail from a group in our catchment who my business has worked with over the years to bring our business forward on land management. This time frame is not long for producers to hear about the proposal, get their head around how it will impact their business then send off a submission. I would like to suggest this time frame for a submission could have been longer which gives everyone time to put their thoughts together.

Even after reading the proposal and viewing the penalties I still am unaware what the minimum standards to this proposal are. I would like to suggest that there should have been clearer standards included in the proposal to make producers more aware how this will impact their business.

I think self-regulation would be a better way to go as it gives land owners ownership of the improvement to their environment, as each landscape is different this allows for innovation that suits each particular landscape. Once ownership is taken away there is no incentive to become creative and makes owners feel they are working to the benefit of a third party rather than their business.

I am always very wary of government regulations as to who it will benefit in the long term and is it answering to some outside influence that could not care less about the caretakers of the environment the landholders. I would suggest this proposal must be well thought out to benefit all parties along the chain and not just one group because if it is imbalanced this will not work and then the Government has a much bigger problem on their hands.

Most landholders today are aware of run off and the loss of soil to their property and with the GBM program and courses that have been held, producers are heading in the right direction. My land would be about 400KLs from the reef and during that course there are weirs, dams and smaller natural waterholes in the river.

It concerns my business that the GBM programme may not fully cover best practice or it may only stand up for a short period. This really worries me as a lot of time and effort was put into that programme by producers and DAF to come up with standards that would benefit the environment and also take the business forward. If this was to change my question, who would come up with new standards.

I am not sure of how this proposal will affect my business but like all government proposals there will be some concern as time goes on.

The penalties seem to be very harsh and as producers we would be at the mercy of judgement of someone who may not know anything about running a property or the environment in a particular region. I would like to suggest before any practice is put in place to consult widely and take in many different views. There are many worldwide consultants who do a marvellous job of improving the environment.

Without knowing the small print of this proposal it is very difficult to say how it will impact my business. I would like to suggest for any new land management proposals to become legislation it must be manageable and all parts of the chain must have wide consultation which hasn't happened at this stage.

I would like to state that I know there are producers out there who do not do the right thing by the environment and their business. My suggestion to this is these producers must be contacted and helped through a management change. This must not be done by force or penalties which seems to be the way at the moment. If force was the way forward I think the government outcomes will be much less and everyone loses out.



Helen Sullivan

