

CAPRICORN CONSERVATION COUNCIL INC



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A voice for the environment

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The Research Director
State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee
Parliament House
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Submission to Land Tenure Inquiry

Capricorn Conservation Council since 1973 has been the principal non-government environmental organisation in Central Queensland. CCC covers environmental issues in the Fitzroy Basin, the largest catchment flowing into the Great Barrier Reef lagoon, plus the coastal and marine areas from Baffle Creek to St Lawrence (Broadsound Coast). (Figure 1)
CCC's aims to:

- To preserve the biodiversity and integrity of species and ecosystems—land, water, marine, and atmosphere.
- To prevent the exploitation of the region's natural resources when it impacts on ecological sustainability.
- To ensure the CQ community is heard on environmental issues and that individuals receive appropriate assistance and advice.
- To engage the community by developing partnerships and strategic alliances which achieve greater conservation outcomes.

Due to the short time frame for comment to the **Land Tenure Inquiry** CCC has prepared only the brief comments below. In addition CCC supports the general principles contained in both the Queensland Conservation Council and National Park Association of Queensland submissions, in particular:

Management of National Parks is governed and must remain governed by a cardinal principle: To provide, to the greatest possible extent, for the permanent preservation of the area's natural condition and the protection of the area's cultural resources and values.

Queensland has a small, protected area estate in comparison with Worlds Best Practice and other jurisdictions.

Honouring existing Land Use Agreements (e.g. Delbessie Agreement, Nature Refuges)

Additional comments from CCC are summarised on the following page.

CCC supports the development of other forms of public open space provided the high conservation value areas do not become slotted into this. CCC also supports continuing Land and Water Management Plans and other requirements which can avoid future mistakes in land development (e.g. the proposed irrigation assignments in the Gulf River systems).

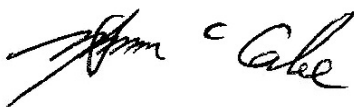
The securing of protected area estate under current processes is just as likely to involve freehold land as lease land and usually purchase prices above valuation is the norm. It is not clear whether the inquiry will involve State Forest of which considerable hectares (500,000 plan) which were being considered as conversion into National Park status under the previous government.

There is a positive argument for pastoral lessees to get into tourism (e.g. they can reduce impact on the land if not totally grazing focussed) but this step is usually inhibited by native title rules and therefore difficult to support with considerable consultation.

Turning pastoral land into cropping land (especially irrigation) is also problematical. Fortunately the Land and Water Management Plans now required for irrigation farming will help knock out inappropriate expansion. CCC supports retention of these as also there should be rejection of broad scale vegetation clearing being returned to the landscape especially in fragile, not productive lands.

There seems no mention of urban and urban fringe lands/ protection of agricultural soils in urban fringes. The open space schemes which are faltering in SEQ and non-urbanization of most suitable pastoral/agricultural land should be supported. Ditto for important catchment areas (mountains and hills) and non-alienation of coastal land.

CCC would like to be involved in further consultation especially in regard to changes which affect land use / tenure changes in Central Queensland.



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