

The Research Director
State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND 4000

By email: sdiic@parliament.qld.gov.au

4th April 2014

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Comments on Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014

I have been directed by the State Council of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland (Wildlife Queensland) to provide comment for consideration by the committee on the above legislation. Wildlife Queensland is one of the longest established and most respected wildlife-focused conservation groups in Queensland. With over 5500 supporters spread across branches throughout the State with supporters interstate and overseas, Wildlife Queensland is a strong voice for our wildlife and its habitat.

Wildlife Queensland is apolitical. Our aims include;

- Preserve the flora and fauna of Australia by all lawful means
- Educate the community in an understanding of the principles of conservation and preservation of the natural environment
- Discourage by all legal means, the possible destruction, exploitation and unnecessary development of any part of the natural environment.
- Encourage rational land use and proper land planning of existing and future development, and the use of the natural environment and its management.

Wildlife Queensland appreciates the opportunity to provide comment on the Bill. This Bill amends a broad range of legislation and has significant impact on land management in Queensland. It facilitates state land tenure reforms, which in turn provides flexibility to particular resource tenure holders, addresses acquisition of non-native title rights that is consistent with the Commonwealth Native Title Act legislation and addresses acquiring land for public and environmental purposes.

The legislation is extensive and addresses many aspects. Wildlife Queensland will limit comment to matters of particular concern and interest to our organisation. However it should not be construed if no comment is provided that Wildlife Queensland supports that position presented. Wildlife Queensland has no right to speak on behalf of

aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples but strongly support that their interests and aspirations are adequately addressed.

The introduction of rolling leases, together with more flexibility for lease amalgamations and removing restrictions that limit the number and type of rural leases is a concern. Altering due process to facilitate term leases for pastoral purposes to be converted to freehold through a refined process is another concern. Why these matters are of concern is based on the established fact that our environment together with its flora, fauna and ecological processes is in decline. These proposed actions will in fact provide a significant reduction in the capacity to ensure that 55% to 65% of terrestrial Queensland is being effectively managed to conserve and protect our biodiversity and natural landscape. Wildlife Queensland readily acknowledges that certain rights of existing lessees will be enhanced but what benefits will flow to the Queensland public?

The rolling lease replaces the existing renewal process where there was at least an opportunity to insist on enhanced management but under the proposed process it appears that the Minister for Lands is obliged (must) grant an extension applied for. Furthermore the renewal must be for the term of the original lease. This action will remove the opportunity to determine if the current use is in fact the most appropriate and best use for the land.

This potential privatisation of the State has been developed with little to no public consultation of the likely outcome of these changes. There is also concern that the capacity to ensure productivity of the agricultural lands once privatised will be retained.

Finally it is noted that the Nature Conservation Act is to be amended. It is noted that any extensions will be made only with the agreement of the Chief Executive. Unfortunately without access to guidelines that will inform the Chief Director as to his/her decision making process, Wildlife Queensland finds it difficult to provide support for such amendment. While it is anticipated the Chief Executive would function with the best interest of the protected estate in mind that may not always be the case.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Des Boyland', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Des Boyland, Policies and Campaigns Manager