

Submission No 15

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STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE
AND INDUSTRY COMMITTEE

State Development Infrastructure and Industry Committee

From: Karl Just [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 9 April 2013 1:01 PM
To: State Development Infrastructure and Industry Committee
Subject: SUBMISSION for Vegetation Management Framework Amendment Bill 2013

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In writing this submission to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee I want to outline a few of the many reasons I am against the proposed amendment.

The proposal represents some of the most significant backwards steps in environmental protection in Australian history - a disaster for a society that is supposed to be aware of climate change, loss of biodiversity, issues of toxic waste, high levels of extinction of diverse species, water quality, and so on. With that awareness, we have an immediate responsibility to take actions that ensure the protection and enhancement of our ecosystems.

The proposal breaks an election promise by Newman to retain the current level of protection under the VMA.

It will effectively overturn the 2006 ban on broadscale land clearing of remnant vegetation using new loopholes for High Value Irrigated Agriculture (including cattle pasture), High Value Cropping/Horticulture, and "Environmental Clearing" which turns out to include flood control works. This is unacceptable, and every step must be taken to protect and enhance our ecosystems, as our own health and long term prosperity depends on them in ways that The Committee must surely be aware of.

The proposed Bill would allow the Minister to make decisions without the NECESSARY process of assessment, public consultation or even consultation of experts or other departments and this is completely inappropriate.

The proposed Bill would open up at least 700,000 hectares of 23+ year old forests currently protected by virtue of containing endangered ecosystems, endangered species, near watercourses or wetlands and slopes above 12% on freehold and indigenous land to clearing once again.

The impact on the Wild Rivers provisions is also unacceptable.

There are many more reasons why this Bill must not go ahead. I would be pleased to go into these in more detail should The Committee require assistance in seeking out information about the state of our environment. Every decision made must take full responsibility for all long term impacts on human health, which is undeniably linked to a healthy environment.