

Submission No 24.



23 March 2013

State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

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

RE: Review of the Vegetation Management Framework Amendment Bill 2013

To The Queensland Government

I have read over the Review of the *Vegetation Management Framework Amendment Bill 2013* and provide the following brief comments. They are not brief because I don't have a lot to say, they are brief because the public consultation period was brief and snidely straddled over the Easter break. As I understand the bill was introduced into parliament on 20 March 2013 and comments were required by 10 April 2013: that is 12 business days!! How can such an important piece of legislation be read and considered in 12 business days? That is less than the public consultation period on a development application – are these two items comparable?

These changes appear to be justified by the QLD Government to support the "Four pillar economy" and not the environment. Interestingly, the environment, via biodiversity, is required to 'have an economy' so the justification is not in the best interest of all Queenslanders, only those that will benefit economically in the short term. This is particularly true for new clearing allowances for agriculture. These allowances are not necessary when we look at the vast areas of already cleared land that is sitting idle growing weeds, when it could be put to agriculture and native remnant forests retained.

The removal of High Value Regrowth from protection is a backward step. Regrowth is the future remnant that we will need to protect and provides our environment with certainty for future regeneration.

Self assessable codes are a useful tool in our planning framework, however to utilise them in a situation where the consequence of a mistake can take hundreds of years to rectify is irresponsible. Clearing of native vegetation need not be prohibitive to sustainable development, but professional and technical assistance and assessment should still be required to undertaken the necessary clearing.

The changes to section 22A in relation to 'relevant purposes' is somewhat confusing in that it requires the applicant to demonstrate that the clearing will have a significant beneficial impact on biodiversity values if they want to clear endangered vegetation. This statement appears subjective and allows for the clearing of endangered vegetation.

The need for 'Simplified Vegetation Mapping' is not justified and is an excuse to change the current system that took years of hard work by many dedicated people to develop. I work with the current mapping system and find it simple, clear and concise.

Finally, the MCU and RoL Triggers for referrals of application should remain at 2Ha – whilst this is a small area in the scheme of state mapping, it is an enormous area for some of the most endangered communities and the stepping stone patches that are so important to our environment and our community.

Please consider these comments.

Regards

Natalie Hoskins