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STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND INDUSTRY COMMITTEE

Urban Development Institute of Australia QUEENSLAND

10 April 2013

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State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee
Vegetation Management Framework Amendment Bill
Parliament House
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BY EMAIL – sdiic@parliament.qld.gov.au

Vegetation Management Framework Amendment Bill 2013

The Institute welcomes the opportunity to comment on the *Vegetation Management Framework Amendment Bill 2013.* The Institute has previously advocated for a cooperative approach to vegetation management in Queensland and a reduction in the regulatory burden on development to support economic growth.

The Institute is supportive of the reforms, particularly:

- the introduction of 'necessary environmental clearing' which will reduce the regulatory burden for important rehabilitation and infrastructure projects;
- the integration and consolidation of mapping layers into a streamlined regulated vegetation management map;
- the removal of high value regrowth regulations from freehold and indigenous land; and
- regulated vegetation mapping which lock in vegetation category areas for the state, providing certainty to landholders.

While the property and development industry acknowledges the Government's work to cut green tape and improve efficiency, the Institute believes that the reforms should be extended to include exemptions for all clearing within the urban footprint, with the exception of endangered regional ecosystems.

The Institute also requests the removal of Sections 22C and 22D from the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* (VMA). These draconian provisions have a modifying effect in respect of appeal rights under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* (SPA) for particular applications, yet are contained within the VMA. Their effect precludes an applicant from appealing where VMA issues are involved, unless the applicant has first availed itself of the provisions under the SPA which allow an applicant to make representations and seek to negotiate with the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. The Institute is not aware of any other referral agency having such a requirement. The provisions introduce unnecessary risk to the applicant, for no measurable benefit. If an applicant chooses to negotiate with the Department (e.g. by suspending the decision period to make representations and try to seek an amended concurrence agency response from the Department) then the applicant can do so under the SPA. The Institute sees no value in the applicant being forced to engage that process, particularly where the applicant forms a view that it will be of no benefit.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and we would welcome the opportunity to further discuss these issues with you.

Yours sincerely
Urban Development Institute of Australia (Queensland)

Marina Vit
Chief Executive Officer