

Submission No 35



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

The Research Director
State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee
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Dear Committee,

Vegetation Management Framework Amendment Bill 2013

This submission is made by Ergon Energy Corporation Limited (**Ergon Energy**) in response to the *Vegetation Management Framework Amendment Bill 2013 (Bill)*.

Ergon Energy is a Queensland Government-owned corporation that supplies electricity to approximately 700,000 customers across a vast operating area of over one million square kilometres – around 97% of Queensland. Ergon Energy's operations include managing vegetation for the safe and reliable construction and operation of electrical infrastructure.

Ergon Energy supports the Bill's objectives of reducing red tape and regulatory burden. Any reduction in red tape and regulatory burden assists with the efficient supply of electrical infrastructure.

Ergon Energy offers cautious support for the creation of a head of power, under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999 (VMA)*, to create self-assessable codes for development regulated through the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009 (SPA)*. The proposed self-assessable vegetation clearing code for relevant infrastructure activities would apply to Ergon Energy's electrical infrastructure. Currently, Ergon Energy is able to clear some vegetation as exempt development because the clearing meets one or more criteria under Schedule 24 of the *Sustainable Planning Regulation 2009 (SPR)*, such as Schedule 24, Part 1, Item 10 and Part 2, Item 2(d). It would be contrary to the Bill's objectives and of concern to Ergon Energy if the development of a self-assessable code would cause exempt development to become subject to self-assessment.

Where Ergon Energy's clearing is not exempt development, Ergon Energy's operations could be simplified by making relevant infrastructure activities subject to self-assessment.

When the code is in force, it will be necessary to amend Schedule 3, Part 2 of the SPR so as to include operational work carried out in accordance with a self-assessable vegetation clearing code made under the VMA. This amendment should make it clear that the operational work is only self-assessable if it is not clearing or another activity or matter mentioned in Schedule 24, Part 1 or clearing mentioned in Schedule 24, Part 2.

Ergon Energy requests the opportunity to participate in the development of the code for relevant infrastructure activities. This participation is essential to ensuring the code operates efficiently and meets the objectives of reducing red tape and regulatory burden.

A small amendment to clause 19O(1)(a)(ii) should be made: the word "to" should be replaced by the word "for".

To further support the Bill's aims, Ergon Energy asks that the Government considers amending clause 12 of the Bill to allow someone other than the 'owner of land' to apply to amend a regulated vegetation management map. This would provide anybody affected by errors on the map with the ability to seek map corrections and would assist in ensuring that regulated vegetation maps are true and accurate.

We look forward to participating in the development of the self-assessable code for relevant infrastructure activities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like Ergon Energy to provide any further details in support of this submission.

Yours faithfully



Kerry Ryan
Acting General Manager, Health Safety and Environment