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CCA SUBMISSION - VEGETATION MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT BILL 2013

Cement Concrete & Aggregates Australia (CCA) is the peak industry body for the \$7 billion-a-year heavy construction materials industry in Australia. Our members are involved in the extraction and processing of quarry products, as well as the production and supply of cement, pre-mixed concrete and supplementary materials. Our overarching objective is to work constructively with the Queensland Government, local authorities and the general community towards policy and planning frameworks that recognise the importance of heavy construction materials to Queensland's economy, infrastructure and the general community.

We welcome the opportunity to make a submission to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee in relation to the *Vegetation Management Framework Amendment Bill 2013* (the Bill), particularly in relation to the extractive industry.

In recent years, the extractive industry has faced numerous difficulties in relation to vegetation management legislation and policy. We believe this approach has been overly complex, disproportionate, and has not taken into account the advances the industry has achieved in vegetation management. Such policy frameworks, which have had the effect of sterilizing small pockets of vegetation on quarry sites, have been difficult to navigate, and have had the potential to result in perverse environmental outcomes.

As such, CCA is very supportive of the Queensland Government's effort to provide a more streamlined regulatory framework for the management of vegetation in Queensland, whilst still ensuring protection of Queensland's native vegetation resources.

Specific characteristics of the extractive industry

The extractive industry has a number of specific characteristics that impact on our interaction with vegetation management frameworks:

- Quarries supply the essential raw materials needed to support new infrastructure. 90% percent of all extractive products are used in the construction of homes, commercial buildings, schools, hospitals, roads and bridges.
- In general, quarries only provide materials to their local communities, and quarry material needs to be sourced from specific geological areas. It is not imported from overseas, nor from other parts of Australia. It is a "high volume, low value" material and transportation costs are significant.



- Extractive industry operators are long term participants in an industry with many extractive resource areas in Queensland having lives in excess of 50 years. Existing extractive resources sites contain substantial reserves, which, over a long period of time, the industry has identified, investigated, secured and, in a majority of cases, have obtained the necessary planning approvals.
- The extractive industry carries out progressive vegetation clearing and rehabilitation in line with sequenced extraction - not broad scale clearing. Quarry operators aim to rehabilitate local ecosystems and reduce their environmental impact through ongoing rehabilitation projects. This is a significant part of the quarrying industry, as 80% of our quarry land is actually undisturbed. For example, rehabilitated areas are often covered with soil and overburden found on-site using techniques that reproduce the topography of the terrain and tailing ponds are capped with layers of binding materials. Horticulturalists often work with quarry managers, and provide advice for rehabilitating terminal faces and worked-out areas.

Assessment of Bill's provisions

CCAA believes that the proposed legislation will provide greater certainty for industry through its' transparent, sensible, and well considered approach to managing Queensland's vegetation resources. In particular, CCAA supports the recognition within the Bill of the industry's improved record in adopting responsible vegetation management practices, while penalizing those who do not follow appropriate practices.

CCAA supports the Bill's introduction of new provisions into the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* (VMA) that remove high value regrowth vegetation regulations from freehold and indigenous land. CCAA is also supportive of the Bill's amendments that will return regulation of high value regrowth clearing on freehold and indigenous land to pre-2009 levels, thereby assisting in relation to clearing for the extractive industry both in a key resource area (KRA), and outside a KRA.

CCAA endorses the introduction of a new Ministerial power to create self-assessable vegetation clearing codes, including specifically for the extractive industry. We believe it will provide an opportunity for responsible vegetation clearing which must not be inconsistent with the VMA or State Policy for Vegetation Management.

CCAA notes that the self-assessable codes under the VMA will operate in the same way as self-assessable development under planning scheme. That is, it is an offence for a person to clear vegetation, or conduct a native forest practice under a self-assessable vegetation clearing code without complying with the code. CCAA is very keen to work with the DNRM to develop the code for extractive industries, including issues of offset management and currency periods.

Once again, CCAA thanks you for the opportunity to provide a submission regarding the *Vegetation Management Framework Amendment Bill 2013*. To further discuss any of the issues raised in the submission, [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



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