

SUBMISSION

In providing this submission I refer directly to the key provisions of the legislation which may be amended.

1. Removing High Value Agriculture and Irrigated High Value Agriculture from the Vegetation Management Framework

The removal of the High Value Agriculture from the categories of the Vegetation Management Framework brings into strong focus the apparent intent of the legislation. Is the intent to downsize rural business? Men and women in rural businesses who live with the land and the vegetation every day of their lives are not being valued as stewards of their land. This proposed change in legislation appears to be more like a purposeful retardation of rural businesses, against the profit, production and efficiency principles which create the wealth for the nation. The proposed laws impinge on all three.

Who could encourage family successioning and successful generational handovers of rural based businesses if the trees increase, the grass accordingly decreases, so stock numbers decrease? Then explain to your children and the bank they want to borrow money from why it is a good idea to take on the property which will not sustain cattle numbers it has in the past, and certainly has no potential for efficient and sustaining growth of income due to unrealistic imposts on the tropical vegetation growth which abounds in Queensland.

Vegetation Management laws are effecting succession planning in my family at the moment.

The world needs our food and fibre. In Queensland we have beautiful land, and land is a finite resource and hence is, and should be, highly valued and sought after. But land owners need to be able to make money from their work on the land- enough to cover high Australian wages and huge infrastructure costs.

2. Retaining Self-Assessable Codes

Self assessable codes have become understood as part of management practices in rural Queensland businesses. Rural businesses took up the challenge of self regulation through assessable codes, learning the new language of the code and the new restrictions which rural peak bodies discussed and agreed to when they first became law. For the most part, businesses operated within the law.

Vegetation management is a necessary and recurring aspect of capital expenditure plans, and budgeting, and is expensive. It is not something I would undertake without due consideration for the cost benefit analysis. For example, Box regrowth is a particularly difficult aspect to manage, and is costly. In 5 years, and pushed down Box tree will generate new box trees all along the length of its fallen trunk. We live in tropical Queensland, and that is what Box tree regrowth does.

We are well aware of the value of biodiversity, as well as the fragility of the soils and the slope and other factors impacting on certain areas. Before the self assessable code came into law, my late husband's family left many specific locations on "Echo" which they deemed should remain

untouched, for various good reasons, both business and environmental. That is what good stewards of the land do- with or without Government regulation.

3. Including High Value Regrowth as an additional layer of regulation under the Vegetation Management Framework on leasehold, freehold and indigenous land

This proposed changes regarding High Value Regrowth need to be challenged in a court of law, as it fundamentally alters the status of and our beliefs about the value of Freehold land.

Please note 2 photographs attached from 1960s which show limited tree cover, and also show the fence around the homestead which still exists. I do not have a comparable photograph of today, because I am currently away from home, but I can take new photos and show timber growth and encroachment of grasslands if required by the Commission.

4. Increasing Category R regrowth watercourse vegetation to include additional catchments in the Burnett Mary, Eastern Cape York and Fitzroy Great Barrier Reef Catchments.

I have no personal knowledge of this situation.

5. That no compensation will be payable to landholders subject to added layers of regulation – high value regrowth, regrowth watercourses and essential habitat during transitional arrangements

We are on the land , trying to turn grass into money . Talk of compensation is a secondary issue- nothing could compensate most family farms business owners for the loss of their future prospects, the loss of their ability to successfully succession their rural businesses to the next generation, and the loss of the right to make a profit from the efficient and highly skilled business they have nurtured and loved, and the loss of hope from their life's work.

6. Increasing compliance measures and penalties under vegetation management laws.

The proposed penalties appear excessive . But the bigger issue is that there is not viable “Land Court” or similar structure to provide recourse for those who believe they have suffered a miscarriage of justice in the application of the Vegetation Management Laws.

The intent of the new legislation is in question. And I quote, “Agriculture and Grazing has been removed from the scope of the Code” . So, does this mean that the Code is a document that intrinsically does not accommodate the maintenance and dare I suggest, the expansion of rural businesses which are trying to turn grass into money, based on profitability, production and efficiency? This is a very scary prospect.

7. Other matters relevant to the Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 that the review committee should consider appropriate and worth some consideration

It is my belief that on .23% of Queensland's land area was cleared in the years 15'16. Why the changes to a system which was serving its regulatory purpose?

Signed:	<i>B. R. Clark</i>
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Date:	



