

From:
To: [SDNRAIDC](#)
Subject: Submission to the Inquiry in Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018
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17 March 2018

Committee Secretary
State Development, Natural Resources
and Agricultural Industry Development Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000
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Dear Committee

***Submission to the Inquiry in *Vegetation Management and Other Legislation
Amendment Bill 2018****

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the above Inquiry. This submission is made on behalf of *myself as* a citizen with concern for the environment.

Queensland has witnessed a surge in land clearing since laws and policies were seriously weakened by the Newman LNP government. It is now time to ensure our native woodlands, the native wildlife that relies on them for their habitats, and the iconic Great Barrier Reef are afforded much better protection. Over time, the community needs to see reforms leading to land clearing rates falling significantly.

I strongly support the government's intention to substantially strengthen Queensland's land clearing laws. Overall, we note and endorse the Bill in seeking to achieve:

- The removal of high value agriculture as a relevant clearing purpose and the scrapping of that permit process;
- The re-protection of high conservation value regrowing woodlands, under a broader definition that includes ecologically significant woodlands that are 15 or more years old;
- The scrapping of the Thinning 'self-assessable' accepted development clearing

code;

- The extension of riparian area protections to the last three Great Barrier Reef catchments;
- The capacity to reclassify Category X into Category A;
- The reinstatement of Riverine Protection Permits; and
- The termination of current Area Management Plans.

While I would prefer see the total removal of provisions for ‘managing thickening’, and would strongly endorse changes to the Bill in that regard, I recognise that a second-based option is to have the revised processes and tests that would be established under the Bill as a means of delivering a greater level of protection for some native woodlands.

Notwithstanding the above support, I am disappointed that the Bill includes provisions that could be used to allow new self-assessable codes (Clause 4 of the Bill), create new Area Management Plans (Clause 14 of the Bill), delay the removal of existing Area Management Plans for up to two years (Clause 14 of the Bill). And see reverting protected woodlands to unprotected Category X (Clause 13 of the Bill).

I am also disappointed that government is not proposing to substantially tighten up fodder harvesting provisions, including major restrictions and tying any clearing to official drought declaration.

I wish to see the Bill and associated policies strengthened to address each of these deficiencies, and respectfully ask that the Committee examine options for recommending changes to the Bill and codes accordingly.

Finally, I am anxious to ensure that with the passing of the Bill, protected vegetation, be it Category B (remnant), Category C (high value regrowth), or Category R (Reef riparian), is fully and properly mapped and protected across Queensland.

While not a specific focus for this Bill, I look forward to additional specific action under the Planning Act to better protect threatened species habitats in key areas of Queensland, including koalas and their habitats in southern and central parts of the state.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to raise these matters. I would welcome any invitation to appear in front of the Committee or to assist your Inquiry in any other way. Should you require any further information about this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

George Theobald

