

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 High Value Agriculture (HVA) and irrigated HVA (IHVA) will severely limit the options of many farm businesses to diversify and create a more sustainable and productive business. I cannot understand any government wishing to implement legislation that will severely limit its own agricultural sectors capacity to increase food production. I am concerned that this part of the proposed legislation is going to create food production shortages in the future for our own people and our ability to help feed the world's population.

My own property currently has a small amount of intensive fodder production developed in the past few years and that has certainly increased the viability and production of beef off of my land. It has also given me another option in times of drought being able to utilise hay produced in good seasons to feed my own cattle. With future plans to develop more land and increase the area of cropping and to install an irrigation system to irrigate pasture as well. The viability and drought proofing of the property would be significantly improved. The sustainability for my family into the future really depends on us being able to develop more land for cropping and improved pastures. To be able to sustain myself financially and my son and his future family we will need to increase our intensive farming area.

2. Retaining Self-Assessable Codes

The Self-Assessable Codes need to be retained. It is a system that has previously worked well. Changing this will make a simple manageable area of the legislation into another onerous burden for farmers trying to get through the correct applications etc. Self assessing Codes saves time and money and makes it a simple user friendly process but still with full accountability. Not being able to self assess will cause delays at critical times such as drought.

The self assessing codes need to remain intact.

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

The re-inclusion of High Value Regrowth (HVR) as an additional layer of regulation on leasehold, freehold and indigenous land seems like an overt grab by Queensland Government in search of targets for meeting international treaties such as the Paris Protocol. In 2009 when initially introduced, this HVR layer was prepared hastily with glaring errors including areas of non-native

vegetation (such as orchards) and bare earth.

I have a copy of the proposed mapping for my property but they are complicated with too many different categories and not precise and accurate enough. The Category C area already appears to be incorrect in places but due to the vagueness of the maps it is hard to judge. I am also uncertain and concerned about whether existing locked in pmav's will still be recognised and abided by with government. Or does the new mapping over rule the current pmav? In previous years trying to correct incorrect mapping has often met with little or no response from the government departments .It is time consuming and difficult to get department staff out to discuss things on the ground where they need to be. It is difficult to comprehend the continual shifting of the goal posts for farming when there are no similar restrictions for other freehold land. If I want to remove trees in my backyard or acreage block in Brisbane I am free to do what I like with my land. The current mapping and legislation was already completely sufficient and I am happy to stay in those guidelines. They were workable and environmentally sustainable at the same time.

I don't feel we had anywhere near enough time for submissions and discussion and find the whole issue stressful and worrying. Speaking with friends, neighbours and many other rural people they are very concerned too. Many of them found just this submission process too much to understand and work through, let alone the legislation and the new mapping involved. Every time we think we have a workable system in agriculture in Queensland it gets brought up again and a whole new set of confusing maps and rules are on the table. It is a problem that needs to be sorted out and increasing the penalties in my opinion is just biting the hand that feeds you. Surely in this day and age we can have a more user friendly system with long term clear and basic maps in place. The future food security of our nation and others relies on farmers being able to farm successfully, sustainably and for the long term.

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

In addition to the high value regrowth layer the impact of the overnight changes to the regrowth watercourse mapping and the extent of essential habitat mapping will be huge. The current strong focus on developing Northern Australia is not going to be possible with the new mapping. Agricultural development in the state and particularly in North Queensland will be at a standstill if these proposed maps are put into place. Often as is the case with my property the areas adjacent to watercourses are the most fertile. The halting of all development along these watercourses will be to the detriment of farming families and the nation in general. The uncertainty of the changing maps will stifle growth and development of intensive agriculture as well.

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

If government is going to take over with added layers of regulation on our High Value regrowth and regrowth water courses and essential habitat areas who is going to compensate farmers for their losses? Why do we not get compensation for our businesses being limited and the farms we bought and paid for being devalued? Our incomes being downgraded and our viability being threatened. With regrowth control programmes and the introduction of better pasture species over the past 20 years the carrying capacity of land like mine has increased from 1 beast to approximately 20 to 25 acres down to 1 beast per 8 to 10 acres. A great increase in productivity not possible if there is no control of the vegetation. Allowing my farm to support myself and my son. Instead of eking out an existence on my own. My property is quite sustainable at this level and is in a much better state environmentally than it was when I arrived here in 2004.

High Value regrowth areas in my situation are potentially \$2000 to \$3000 an acre more valuable than the land untouched and undeveloped. The potential for income of these areas is huge compared to leaving them as is. Going forward we will need to develop more land to be able to sustain to families.

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

I believe this Bill breaches fundamental legislative principles (FLPs) as outlined in section 4 of the Legislative Standards Act 1992.

Legislation should have sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals and consequently should not adversely affect rights and liberties, or impose obligations, retrospectively.

I have a huge issue with laws being made retrospective it is wrong and unfair to any citizen of this country to impose retrospective laws.

This proposed legislation does not follow that principal. It appears that the government is seeking to victimise farmers and only farmers as land is cleared daily for urban sprawl and development and also mining. I fail to understand how penalties can be tripled on farmers who make a mistake? In my experience most farmers are responsible and try their best to follow the rules. They are trying to maintain their country for future generations not destroy it.

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

I am 47 years old and have been farming both intensive agriculture and extensive grass grazing since I was seventeen. I have seen huge development and more importantly massive improvements in the farming landscape and see that the majority of farmers when given secure and workable legislation take care of their land in the best way possible.

- Farmers and producers are experts at sustainability. There are perfect examples of this with fourth and fifth generations still maintaining the same land in good condition. I have been on my current property since 2004 and it is a far improved property both farming and environmentally than it was when I purchased it. I see a huge future for my son here if we are allowed to manage and develop the country properly.
- We need long term secure legislation not continually changing rules, otherwise we cannot plan for the future or the future of our children.
- Banks are not being cooperative with our lending due to the uncertainty that is

continually hanging over our farm. Developing the land for farming is an ongoing process that needs long term certainty. My farm will be unviable in a few short years if we are not allowed to maintain and control the regrowth. Carrying capacity and therefore production and income is severely affected by excess vegetation.

- We want the opportunity to drought proof our business for a sustainable future and we cannot do that if our high value land has restrictions on its use and development.
- Self-Assessable Codes have been very useful and more cost effective than lodging applications. Access to government staff and departments from remote areas like ours is difficult and always problematic. Internet and mobile phone access is a major problem for many of rural Australia's farmers including myself. Implementing systems that need applications and contact with government officials instantly creates problems.

I do not know how I will be able to continue to employ my son and earn a living for myself if I am not allowed to continue managing the vegetative regrowth on my property at the same level as I do now. The dream of handing your family farm on to the next generation will be almost impossible. We already protect the waterways, creeks and river systems from clearing and have a very good regrowth control programme that does not over clear the existing trees. We have areas of old growth trees that will never be touched and areas saved for wildlife habitats. Harsher and more restrictive legislation will devalue my property and much of Queensland's farmland. We urgently need sensible, sustainable, long term legislation that is fully accessible and workable for farming families and enterprises.

Signed:	Helen Roth
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