



## Wildlife Queensland

Cassowary Coast - Hinchinbrook Branch

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20<sup>th</sup> March 2018

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

Please accept this submission on the Vegetation Management and other legislation amendment Bill 2018. We previously submitted our comments two years ago and the following is not substantially different however Queensland has been subjected to two more years of barely regulated land clearing. This means that in many areas the situation is considerably worse.

Wildlife Queensland was actively involved in the initial drafting of the Vegetation Management Act 1999. Although we were disappointed that there was little compensation for affected landholders, we were assured that river bank integrity would be protected by vegetated buffers, viable networks of habitat would be maintained with no clearing of areas of high conservation value. (letter from Hon. Henry Palaszczuk Min. for primary Industries to Wildlife Queensland Patron Margaret Thorsborne 2000) These Policy Criteria were never achieved and any protections afforded by the Act were removed by the Vegetation Management Framework Amendment Bill 2013 which we strenuously opposed.

The Cassowary Coast-Hinchinbrook area, which is our primary concern is in urgent need of the reinstatement of protective vegetation legislation. The endangered Mahogany Glider, placed on the top twenty priority list by the Federal Government this year, depends for its survival on habitat protected on PRIVATE PROPERTY. Therefore the Vegetation Act is the primary source of protection. More than 80% of the coastal woodlands have been cleared in recent decades due to the expansion of Primary Industries like sugar cane and Forestry. These woodlands are the habitat of a whole suite of endangered animals and plant communities. They are part of the coastal wetland system that filters discharge into the Great Barrier Reef lagoon and protects the inland from Cyclonic erosion.

This branch of Wildlife Queensland therefore supports

- The restoration of protection for riparian area trees
- The restoration of protections for “High Value Regrowth” especially woodlands on freehold and Aboriginal land
- Retrospectivity measures
- Removal of permits to clear land for “High Value Agriculture” as it would apply to coastal habitat.

We would also like to see an amendment which improves regulation of thinning and clearing for fodder.

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Mahogany Glider - Petaurus gracilis image © D.Dickson

Of critical importance however is the reinstatement of the Precautionary Principle and the principles of ecologically sustainable development(ESD) which provide the fundamental purpose of the Act.

We urge you to present a strong Act which will enable land managers both Government and private landholders to meet the challenges which will be brought by Climate Change and the accompanying economic disruption.

Yours faithfully,

Suzanne Smith (Hon.Sec.)