

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

Background

- High value agriculture and irrigated high value agriculture refers to cropping.
 - This change will take away the ability of land holders to clear small areas of land to develop farms.
1. The removal of High Value Agriculture (HVA) and irrigated HVA (IHVA) affects farmers in regions differently, with those in the north particularly hard hit. Throughout northern Queensland energy and protein become limiting in cattle diets during the dry season and this can cause farmers issues with stock survival and welfare through years of drought. HVA and IHVA permits have provided farmers in northern Queensland with the opportunity to grow fodder and grain for supplementing in the dry season and finishing off stock for market.
 2. If Agriculture is to continue to survive in Queensland, we as farmers must compete to stay competitive in world wide trade. This means that we always need to be looking for ways to increase our productivity. One of the most efficient ways to do this is to provide our livestock with a continuous supply of good nutritious fodder. This can be done by developing small areas of high value fodder/grain crops which can then be fed to livestock. By doing this more food can be produced per hectare of land, which makes farmers more profitable and benefits the industry through increased efficiencies.
 3. HVA areas also reduce the impacts of drought, through diversified income opportunities and reduce reliance on government drought assistance programs.
 4. If the proposed laws are allowed to pass it effectively means that any future agricultural development opportunities in Queensland will not be realised. **THIS WILL BE THE BEGINNING OF THE END for farming in this state.**

2. Retaining Self-Assessable Codes

Background

The Amendment Bill seeks to deliver on the Government's 2017 election commitments to protect remnant and high conservation value non-remnant vegetation; amend the accepted development vegetation clearing codes to ensure they are

providing appropriate protections based on Queensland Herbarium advice; and align the definition of high value regrowth vegetation with the international definition of High Conservation Value.

Science-based self-assessable codes help farmers carry out the routine vegetation management practices necessary to sustainably produce food and fibre.

The self-assessable codes help farmers ensure trees and grass stay in balance, avoid soil erosion and feed animals in drought. Farmers are not required to obtain permits for work done under the self-assessable codes, but they are required to notify the Queensland Government.

Farmers need their land to stay healthy and productive, self-assessable codes allow a good balance between government oversight and government interference

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

Background

The re-inclusion of High Value Regrowth (HVR) as an additional layer of regulation on leasehold, freehold and indigenous land is 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 in a 'desk-top' mapping exercise with associated errors including areas of non-native vegetation (such as orchards) and bare earth.

By adding yet another level of regulation over our freehold land, we are once again seeing the value of this level of land tenure further eroded!

In the early 1990s we paid large amounts of money to buy the timber on our land and upgrade our lease hold land to freehold. Since that time continuous levels of government regulation has meant that we are unable to touch the very timber we purchased – our rights to manage the very things we paid for have been stolen.

The Government is essentially adding an extra regulation over FREEHOLD/indigenous land, do we tell people who live in the city they cannot remove a tree to put in a pool, a new pavement or shed in their backyard?

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

Background

In addition to the high value regrowth layer being added back onto freehold and indigenous land, landholders will also be impacted by overnight changes to the regrowth watercourse mapping and the extent of essential habitat mapping. There is currently a strong focus on developing Northern Australia. The Queensland State Government Vegetation Management Framework is preventing these farmers from developing agriculture projects.

- It is very hard to comment on the direct impacts on my business as I am not confident that the mapping I have, shows any of the proposed changes.
- With the limited internet capabilities we have, and my complete lack of understanding on how to use the new “non-google earth” queensland globe I feel completely ill-equipped to find out how the new laws will effect me directly, let alone how I will ever

<p>comply with the regulation given how frequently changes seem to be occurring!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All levels of government seem to be enthusiastic about “developing Northern Australia”, however, if these laws are passed any agricultural development in Northern Australia will be impossible – worse still, these laws will actually mean the agricultural production DECREASES! • Trees are a living thing, like all living things they continually grow and multiply. These laws will mean that farmers are unable to maintain continuously thickening vegetation and therefore production will decrease. This will mean less food. • With a world human population growing at an alarming rate, producing less food is the complete opposite of what governments should be encouraging
<p>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</p>
<p>Background</p> <p>Again, the issue of compensation arises with the addition of these layers where is the recompense for Queensland farmers and what is the estimated dollar value of these layers?</p> <p>These laws are set to starve Queensland farmers of their right to manage their land in a sustainable way for the benefit of the green minority. If this is what the government wants to do then farmers need to be paid for their loss of income and the loss of value to their assets. If Queensland’s farmers are now going to be “protecting trees” for the benefit of the rest of the state, they need to be paid accordingly</p>
<p>6. Increasing compliance measures and penalties under vegetation management laws.</p>
<p>Background</p> <p>The Bill potentially breaches fundamental legislative principles (FLPs) as outlined in section 4 of the Legislative Standards Act 1992.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>In addition, penalties have effectively been tripled indicating there is a sense the Government does not think farmers who mistakenly clear vegetation are being penalised enough.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the government departments continually changing, service centers in regional areas continually being shut down and the laws continually being changed on the fly with next to no scientific, evidence based, consultation. How can farmers in rural isolated areas with crap internet service, crap phone service and no longer any type of government extension service be expected to stay abreast of what has become a farcical and continually changing set of laws?? • The fundamental principle that farmers need to protect their land in order to survive is being forgotten. Instead these laws which propose outrageously high penalties is unfair

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

These laws are flawed.

There is NO scientific, evidenced based consolation occurring. There is no consideration for the long-term impacts of Agriculture in Queensland, farmer's businesses, their families or their future.

If these unfair, one-sided laws are allowed to pass, this government will be remembered as the government that finally killed agriculture in Queensland. No doubt there will be many green groups that will be happy about the loss of agriculture. But, I believe, when food is no longer produced here the majority of Queenslanders will regret that this has been allowed to occur.

We are a young, pro-active, well-educated farming family. Despite government interference we have manage to look after our land AND run a successful business employing close to 20 full time staff.

If these laws are passed:

- **Our land will be less valuable and less productive.**
- **Our business will be less profitable and we will be forced to employ less staff.**
- **We will produce less beef**
- **There will be less biodiversity on our land. We will be less resilient to droughts and natural disasters**
- **But most disappointing of all, our land will deteriorate and will be less environmentally sustainable.**

Signed:	Doug Burnett
Address:	
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