

The Vegetation Management Act of 1999 did not recognize the use of Mulga trees as a Fodder tree/crop.

On 6 June 2001 a letter was written to the Minister concerned by a deputation of graziers and South West Strategy in Charleville.

On 6 February 2002 a Mulga Fodder Harvesting Practices Round table was facilitated by Dr Ted Christie (barrister).

Eventually we had a code with Area Management Plans in conjunction with Landcare groups. By doing this with the code of practice we were able to get a flexible permit of five years.

The next stage of harvesting was to have a self assessable code for harvesting mulga with a ten year permit. Department was informed when harvesting was commenced.

Audits were conducted to assess if the department was happy with this and it appeared to be acceptable to all parties.

From 2001 to 6 March 2018 there has been many meetings, consultations and delegations with graziers and government. Largely this has been harmonious with both parties happy to consult and hear each other.

The cost to Mulga lands businesses if Mulga harvesting is curtailed will be immense. The Mulga tree has the ability to self seed and grow profusely when the rain comes. There will be large areas of land that will become unproductive. This will decimate the towns of the south west and many jobs will be lost. Is this what the government want?

We wish to see proper costing of this change in vegetation management. The fact that in the past we were encouraged by government to amalgamate leases has now come full circle to totally damage our business. 500 ha per lot now. Those businesses who did not amalgamate can have 500 ha per lot. Some properties have up to 5 or more lots. This is a very inequitable tax on business families who did as governments requested.

I hope to see some proper consultation on any of these changes and we must have this all costed to show what the consequences to business will be.

Yours faithfully

Kathy Schmidt