

Submission to Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amandment Bill 2018

Organisation or individual Coolibah Partnership

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Is all or part of your submission confidential? No

Submission

In providing this submission, I refer to the fact that my family has owned and occupied our leasehold land for 130 years. During that time we have developed and improved the land in order to establish a successful and sustainable grazing business.

Had the proposed laws been in place for that period of time there is no way that this would have been achievable. It would have been impossible to build the necessary infrastructure such as fences and dams without tree clearing. It would have been impossible to establish the grasscover which we have achieved without tree clearing. Without the grass cover, erosion would have been much more prevalent and reef runoff much more of an issue.

Our country is comprised of brigalow, blackbutt, box and on the original maps is described as open savannah. Thickening and encroachment of scrub and current bush over the years has seen it become anything but open. Without constant thinning and treatment the grasscover is constantly threatened. Good grasscover is the backbone of our enterprise both from a productivity perspective as well as an environmental one. It is very obvious to us that the removal of trees promotes grasscover. We have many examples on our property to support this and years of experience to back it up.

The rents on our leasehold land are forever increasing and the demands that we nurture this land and keep it free from weeds and pests are become ever louder but at the same time your government is taking away our ability to improve, manage and sustain the condition of our pasture.

If our business is to be hamstrung by waiting for approval before we do anything we will not survive and nor will the sustainability of our lease. Being a seasonal business it is important to be able to do things such as thinning and clearing at the appropriate time to make the most of nature. Being hamstrung by a department running on a 5 to 9 timetable and having to wait months for approval is not how this agricultural business has been built. We need the flexibility of being able to act at the best seasonal opportunity and we also need certainty from election to election to know that our business decisions will not be booted from pillar to post every time we have a change of government.

If my family were not good environmentalists and in tune with nature I suspect we would not still be here after 130 years. I implore you to take on board the skills and knowledge we have learned and gained over this period and work in tune with us rather than against us. We have only achieved so much because we have not been tied up with red or green tape. If we are doing the right thing, and it appears the majority of farmers are, then let us continue without interference.