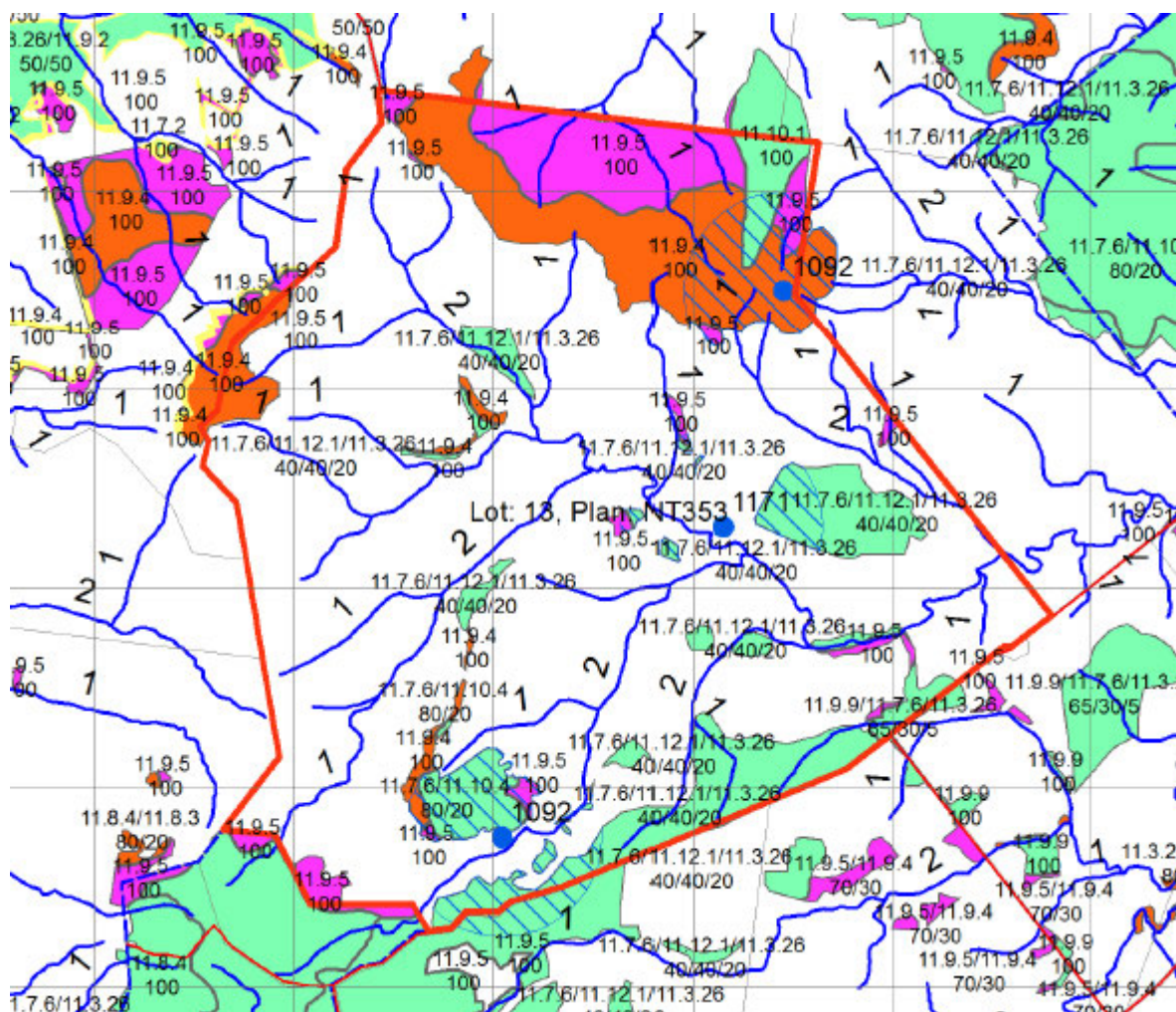


Committee Secretary
State Development, Natural Resources
and Agricultural Industry Development Committee
Parliament House George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

My submission relates to the need for Retaining Self-Assessable Codes for managing native vegetation

Background

"Wonga Hills" is well known for the large area of virgin brigalow softwood scrub our family has retained in its natural state. From the map below you will see the large 600Ha area of high value remnant vegetation on the north of our property. It has been our family's long term desire to retain this area in it's present state. Red areas on our veg maps are not a concern to us as we had already set these areas aside as preservation areas.



Our family has been involved in Landcare and promoting the conservation of these remnant vegetation areas for 50 years. Where the retention of valuable remnant areas has been

encouraged, along with shelter belts to link them together, the area we have retained on "Wonga Hills" is over 5km long and 2km wide. As far as I know it is the largest area of remnant vegetation of it's type. Whilst large areas of it could have been cleared many years ago, our family has foregone the extra grazing to preserve it. We enjoy and love this property and have managed and showcased the whole property to demonstrate how high value conservation can coexist alongside profitable sustainable beef cattle grazing.

It was rewarding when our family's conservation work was recognised when "Wonga Hills" won the Centenary Land Management and Conservation Award for South East Queensland in 1990. Since then we have done additional fencing to exclude cattle grazing and included additional buffer areas to protect it.

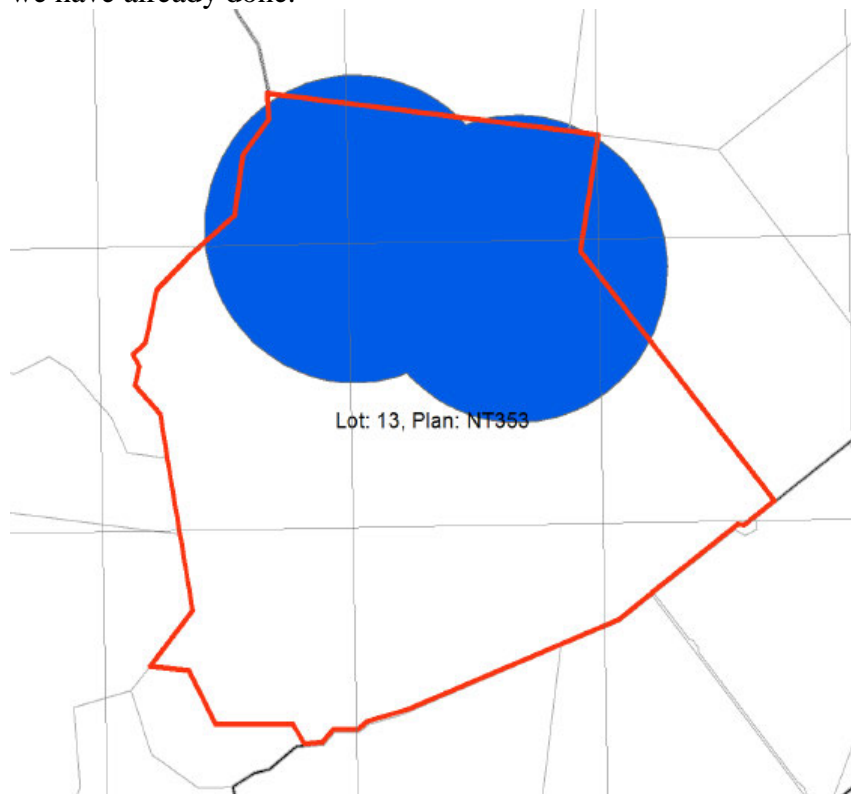
Over many years my mother, Janice Carlyle collected and had many botanical and fauna specimens identified and catalogued. A University of Newcastle PhD study has been done on part of it along with many visiting ornithologists and botanists visiting the area. Typical of the comments of many visitors on the conservation work was that of Don Henry from the WWFA (World Wildlife Fund) who summed it up as "first class with many thanks".

Also of note is the fact that we have other areas of high value remnant vegetation on "Wonga Hills" along with wildlife corridors that don't show on the above map

Repercussions for us of the Protected plants Flora Survey Trigger Map

As you can see from the above we have been preserving our native remnant vegetation before there was such a thing as Vegetation Maps. I have regularly downloaded vegetation the maps and have been like minded as to their purpose.

However the new more recently added trigger maps impose an additional buffer beyond what we have already done.





Estimated coverage over our cleared grazing country

From a land management perspective I could sum these blue circles as a very blunt, haphazard, almost lazy way to protect an ecosystem. In our case it comes with virtually negligible benefit to preserving any "essential habitat". (See photo below) This is cleared grazing country.



It also impacts our future grazing management if the large area of "category X" country is slowly overgrown with non-endemic woody regrowth. Examples would be *Acacia Salicina* (Sally Wattle) and *Acacia Excelsa* (Iron Wood).



Common name pink berried wilga



Iron wood regrowth.



Iron wood regrowth invading pasture.

Both are invasive woody weeds not endemic to this land type but causing woody infestations and severely reducing the grazing capacity and therefore income of the property along with increased soil erosion due to reduced ground cover.

Retained softwood scrub alongside improved pasture - a Win/win situation for retained remnant vegetation and productive grazing.



We have retained many shade clumps and wildlife corridors of Brigalow (*Acacia harpophylla*), Belah (*Casuarina cristata*), Bottle trees (*Brachychiton, rupestre* and *australis*), Roseapple (*Owenia venosa*), Crows Ash (*Flindersia australis*) and Native Pomegranate (*Capparis mitchelli*) to name a few species.



Our family has demonstrated an ability to go "above and beyond the call of duty" in preserving and caring for our remnant vegetation and essential habitat.

The purpose of my submission

As managers of the land we need to undertake day to day regrowth control. Like many landholders we have demonstrated our ability to care for the land and maintain a healthy balance between production and conservation.

1 We should not be required to pay upwards and over \$3000 to have a government inspector approve every regrowth control activity as is the case under the protected plants trigger map.

2 As indicated by Department of Environment staff to me the 4km blue circles are arbitrary, inaccurate and need to be trimmed to more accurately reflect the vegetation that needs to be protected. We have a PMAV in place and the Department of Environment imposition on us is a back door way of bypassing the PMAV agreement. We should have the right to ask the department to revisit this property and modify the trigger maps to give us the ability to continue to manage woody regrowth without paying exorbitant government fees.

As said previously "Wonga Hills" has been showcased as an example of high value conservation successfully running alongside productive sustainable grazing. Our family made a financial sacrifice to preserve this country. This is now in jeopardy if woody regrowth slowly takes over our adjacent pasture. There are a lot of properties with small areas of remnant vegetation being retained. We don't want "Wonga Hills" to be seen as an example of what can happen when a landholder is trying to do the right thing.



The Solution

The 600Ha area of retained remnant brigalow softwood scrub is red on the vegetation maps, not because of government legislation but because our family retained it as a preservation area before government saw the need to step in and legislate.

As we have demonstrated our wish to preserve this remnant vegetation and our knowledge of the flora and fauna I would like legislation changed so that these “trigger map” spots can be ground surveyed to remove the mapping inaccuracies that have been imposed on us. We have already included buffer areas and the further 2km buffer has no meaningful conservation value.

Yours faithfully,
Reg and Jackie Carlyle