

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

2018

When addressing the content of a proposed Bill it is necessary to review a perspective of the matter, to separate reality from rhetoric and to ensure we are not confusing fact with fiction or impinging on basic Civil, Legal and Property Rights.

1. Perspective.

Since the dawn of time mankind has required the three essentials of life:

- a. Water.
- b. Food.
- c. Shelter.

In our modern World we have to add:

- a. Power and Energy
- b. Transport
- c. Infrastructure.

All of these six factors are essential to modern life, and none can be provided without clearing trees and vegetation.

2. It is a fact of life that virtually every food item in every Supermarket in every household fridge, on every meal table, was grown on land that a Farmer has cleared, unless it was sourced from the Ocean.

The cold hard facts are that every single person who eats food and wears clothes are just as involved in Vegetation Clearing as the Farmers.

If there is no cleared land there is no food and no cotton garments.

3. Consistency of Application.

Currently 5 of the 6 essentials of life are either exempt from land clearing regulations or are very marginally impacted.

Housing – Power Lines – Solar Farms – Wind Farms – Coal Generators – Coal Mines – Gas Fields – Roads – Bridges – Schools – Hospitals – Shopping Centres - Sporting Fields etc are all built with impunity to the trees that used to grow there.

Incredibly it is only our farmlands, the food and clothing factories of Society that are facing the wrath and regulation of Political powers.

Obviously, the Act is inconsistent in application and thus quite unjust, unfair and discriminatory.

4. Reality and Rhetoric.

The Government spiel is that Queensland needs vegetation protection or we will inherit a saline dustbowl, a destroyed Barrier Reef, with Greenhouse Gas Emissions going through the roof and no animals left for our children to see.

Most of these claims can be sourced back to the anti-farm Activists of W.W.F. – Wilderness Society – Australian Conservation Society – Greenpeace etc, together with several City based splinter Groups, whose knowledge of land and animal management for production purposes is minimal or near zero.

The facts are that nothing like the alarmists claims that are being relied upon are actually happening.

- A. The Nature Climate Change Study (2015) shows that Woody Biomass (Trees) has increased by 1200kg/ha/year from 1993 – 2012.
- B. The latest DNRM SLATS figures show that wooded vegetation cover has increased in all but 4 Regions of Queensland. Overall there is more woodland cover and more trees than there was in 2011/2012.

5. Fact and Fiction.

- Queensland has some 50-60million hectares of woodland standing today.
- 65% of all clearing carried out in 2013/14 was “regrowth clearing”, that is, land that had been previously cleared and simply regrown, according to SLATS figures.
- When the regrowth and fodder clearing is taken into account it is clear that no widescale indiscriminate clearing of virgin land is actually occurring.
- If we were allowing 100,000 ha of virgin clearing per annum it would take 500 years to clear the remaining Woodland in Queensland and that is a mathematical fact.

6. Inconvenient Truths.

- a. The World standard for determining an “Endangered Species”, that is animal, plant or otherwise, is 5% of it’s original number or extent.
- b. In Australia and Queensland, it is 10% or double the World Standard for determining an endangered species.
- c. When it comes to the International Standard for Vegetation Retention that figure is 10% of each category.
- d. In Queensland we have about 50% retention and the Trees are gaining, according to both the SLATS figures and Nature Climate Change Figures.
- e. Japan’s IBUKA and NASA’S OCO-2 Satellites show that both Queensland and Australia are net Carbon Sinks. We are not carbon emitters.
- f. Renowned Scientist Professor Peter Ridd and Dr. Walter Starke have published papers and given Public Lectures that the Great Barrier Reef is not in the danger claimed.
- g. Over 4% of Queensland or some 6,960,000 hectares are already preserved in National Parks.
- h. There are four International Reports testifying that tree density decreases water flow in rivers.
 - The 2003 Wilcox Report U.S.A.
 - The 1999 Scott Report – SOUTH AFRICA.
 - Free University of Amsterdam.
 - Britain’s Department of International Development.

The common finding was that water flow increased by between 9 to 44% FOR EACH 10% of Riparian Vegetation cleared.

- i. Dr. Bill Borrows and his Colleagues over many years have scientifically proven that when Woody Biomass reaches a critical level that Grass Coverage collapses.

7. Natural Justice and Property Rights.

- Throughout our history the “right to remain silent” has been a pillar of Natural Justice in our Legal System.

- The amendments proposed effectively removes this right.
- If an accused person does not give information to an authorised Officer they face a fine of up to \$23,230.
- The measures proposed ensure that not only are Landholder's Legal Rights trashed but Bankruptcy is staring Landholders in the face.
- A "Stop Work Notice", even if issued in error, carries a fine exceeding half a million dollars, if the accused proceeds.
- Such draconian measures seem to be in breach of Queensland's own Legislative Standards Act.

8. SUMMARY.

- A. The States own figures show there is no credible evidence to support changes to the current Act.
- B. The Trees and Woody Biomass is increasing quicker than the Landholders can clear it.
- C. Queensland already exceeds the World standard for Vegetation retention.
- D. Queensland is a net Carbon Sink.
- E. The term "Endangered Species" in Queensland is double what it is in the rest of the World.
- F. Allowing uncontrolled tree growth results in less water in our Rivers and less grass on the ground. This is not a solution to drought, it simply makes things worse.
The inevitable consequence of legislating for more trees, is that you are legislating for less grass in the paddock and less water in the creeks and rivers.
- G. It violates the principles of Natural Justice, a requirement of Queensland's own Legislative Standards Act.
- H. It is totally discriminatory. Only food Producers are affected, while the rest of Queensland Businesses are exempt.

The proposed amendments should be withdrawn. They are simply a payback for Environmental support at the last Election.

They are simply an abuse of power, imposed without a shred of concern for the damage they will cause to the food Producers of Queensland.

Over 60% of Queensland voters did not give the A.L.P. Government the benefit of a first preference vote. The actual support vote was some 30% of Queensland Voters.

This Legislation clearly does not enjoy majority support of the whole Electorate and is virtually universally opposed by people outside Brisbane and the Coastal glitter strips.

Rural Landholders don't even attempt to dictate on how the Cities should be managed as they recognise they do not possess that expertise. However City Activists who have never managed Rural Land, never grown a crop and never raised livestock, think it is their God Given Right to dictate Land Management to Rural Families who have been producing fruits of the soil for generations.

It is an abuse of power, privilege and political responsibility.