

Submission to the State Development , Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry
Development on Proposed Changes to the Vegetation Management Act and Framework

The North Queensland Miners Association Inc. provide our submission in support of the continuation of the Current Vegetation Management Act 1999 and rejection of the changes proposed in the Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 ("the Bill").

The Explanatory Notes for the Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 make reference to election commitments made by the Queensland Government in 2015.

The current legislation provides a number of restrictions to land clearing by way of protection vegetation areas and other matters of state environmental significance. The existing legislation already places a number of restrictions on small operations and we fear that greater restrictions will make small scale mining operations in the state of Queensland largely unviable.

On the matter of protecting the Great Barrier Reef, it has been reported that the science relating to the reef is varied and often results of one study are not replicated in further studies. It concerns land users that the State Government are looking to add further restrictions on the activities of farmers, pastorists, graziers, miners and people working remotely due to largely unproven "science".

Again, referring to the Explanatory Notes, an objective of "re-introduce riverine protection permits to guard against excessive clearing of riparian vegetation" is stated. A lot of mining operations in North Queensland are already restricted by protections for vegetation intersection a watercourse.

To land users, it feels that the State Government are more concerned with the appearance of protecting the environment than they are with the economic development in regional areas of the State.

Mining in Far North Queensland contributes to the local communities economically and directly keeps a number of people out of the unemployment lines and collecting benefits. Indirectly, Miners shop in local towns for groceries, fuel, diesel, repairs and maintenance services. They also provide compensation for mining activities to landowners, native title parties and pay significant fees, rates and levies to the various State Government departments and Local Governments, all of which would be removed with the closure of mining operations.

Most Miners also maintain positive neighbourly relationships with the underlying Landowners and are on site to assist firefighting and with clean-up of natural disasters such as cyclones. It could be argued that we contribute to maintaining existing vegetation.

Changes in legislation as proposed will make living on and managing the land more difficult than it already is. We cannot continue to herd people into the cities as this places strain on the limited infrastructure available. The State of Queensland should be providing support to it's rural communities and driving economic growth in these areas rather than adding further restriction.

The State must remember that the overwhelming majority people living and working on the land do their best to maintain and improve the environment because they live there. They breathe the air, they grow their own produce (and often other peoples), are in a much better position to know about the best land management for their locality vs a one size fits all approach by the State. In depth consultation should be sought with land managers (and users otherwise) prior to introducing such restrictive environmental measures.

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We provide our support to the submissions submitted by the following persons:

- 4 – Stirling Tavener
- 5 – Robyn Simmons
- 7 – Name suppressed
- 11 – Shane Warner
- 18 – Peter Spies

Claire Mackney
Treasurer
North Queensland Miners Association Inc
Date: 22 March 2018