

**From:**  
**To:** [SDNRAIDC](#)  
**Subject:** Submission to the Inquiry in Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018  
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Committee Secretary  
State Development, Natural Resources  
and Agricultural Industry Development Committee  
Parliament House  
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Dear Committee

Submission to the Inquiry in Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the above Inquiry. This submission is made on behalf of Coomera Conservation Group.

Coomera Conservation Group, is a volunteer community group established for some three years, who came together out of urgent concern for our wildlife, and in particular our important local koala population which is considered nationally significant.

East Coomera-Pimpama is home to one of SEQs largest, genetically diverse, and most viable koala populations. One that straddles both the urban and non-urban area. This area is also home to some of the most significant urban development and population growth in SEQ. Our area consists of three types of koalas:

- 1 those inside the highly fragmented urban area (many of these trapped in small islands of unconnected habitat, with development approvals in place),
2. the urban fringes (where sink populations are being created), and
3. a large nonurban/rural area with capacity to support a viable population in the long term provided it is protected and appropriately managed now.

Sadly the issues that make our koalas so vulnerable are occurring throughout Queensland both as a result of urban development and largely unchecked excessive non-urban tree clearing for agriculture, mining and other purposes.

Queensland has witnessed a surge in land clearing since laws and policies were seriously weakened by the Newman LNP government. It is now time to ensure our native woodlands, the native wildlife that relies on them for their habitats, and the iconic Great Barrier Reef are afforded much better protection. Over time, the community needs to see reforms leading to land clearing rates falling significantly.

We strongly support the government's intention to substantially strengthen Queensland's land

clearing laws. Overall, we note and endorse the Bill in seeking to achieve:

- The removal of high value agriculture as a relevant clearing purpose and the scrapping of that permit process;
- The protection of high conservation value regrowing woodlands, under a broader definition that includes ecologically significant woodlands that are 15 or more years old;
- The scrapping of the Thinning 'self-assessable' accepted development clearing code;
- The extension of riparian area protections to the last three Great Barrier Reef catchments;
- The capacity to reclassify Category X into Category A;
- The reinstatement of Riverine Protection Permits; and
- The termination of current Area Management Plans.

While we would prefer see the total removal of provisions for 'managing thickening', and would strongly endorse changes to the Bill in that regard, we recognise that a second-based option is to have the revised processes and tests that would be established under the Bill as a means of delivering a greater level of protection for some native woodlands.

Notwithstanding the above support, we are disappointed that the Bill includes provisions that could be used to allow new self-assessable codes (Clause 4 of the Bill), create new Area Management Plans (Clause 14 of the Bill), delay the removal of existing Area Management Plans for up to two years (Clause 14 of the Bill). And see reverting protected woodlands to unprotected Category X (Clause 13 of the Bill).

We wish to see the Bill and associated policies strengthened to address each of these deficiencies, and respectfully ask that the Committee examine options for recommending changes to the Bill and codes accordingly.

Finally, we are anxious to ensure that with the passing of the Bill, protected vegetation, be it Category B (remnant), Category C (high value regrowth), or Category R (Reef riparian), is fully and properly mapped and protected across Queensland.

While not a specific focus for this Bill, we look forward to additional specific action under the Planning Act to better protect threatened species habitats in key areas of Queensland, including koalas and their habitats in southern and central parts of the state. The East Coomera-Pimpama area has lost over one third of its koala habitat in a few short years and currently the remaining habitat is considered insufficient to support the remaining koala population (estimated at 500 individuals). Consequently we are frequently seeing animals displaced and competing for ever shrinking resources. The time to act to save these urban and peri urban populations is now.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to raise these matters.

Yours sincerely

Karina Waterman  
On behalf of Coomera Conservation Group.