



OLKOLA
Aboriginal Corporation

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Committee Secretary
State Development, Natural Resources
and Agricultural Industry Development Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000
Via email: sdnraide@parliament.qld.gov.au

Thursday, 22 March 2018

Dear Committee Secretary,

Re: Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

Olkola Aboriginal Corporation owns and manages 869,822 hectares of Olkola Traditional lands in central Cape York Peninsula, and is a registered Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Body for an even larger area of Olkola Country including several pastoral stations on Cape York.

We provide the following submissions to outline our concerns that the proposed 2018 amendments to Queensland's vegetation management laws wholly ignore the inadequate protections provided to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage under the vegetation management legislative regime in Queensland.

The current *Vegetation Management Act 1999* (VMA) has allowed vegetation clearing permits to be issued over Olkola cultural sites, for clearing to occur over Olkola Cultural sites without any involvement of or consultation with Olkola People.

Olkola requests that the proposed Bill be amended to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage sites in Queensland, to:

1. require the Department itself to assess the likelihood of proposed activities under the vegetation clearing permit to cause harm to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, and to take tangible preventative measures such as:
 - a. ensuring the Traditional Owners for an area proposed to be cleared are engaged, that they know about the proposed activity; and

- b. ensure cultural heritage agreements with Traditional Owners are entered into, and appropriate cultural heritage clearances are resourced and performed before any permits for vegetation clearing are issued.

Sending a future act notification to Native Title Representative Bodies and relying on proponents to voluntarily comply with the Aboriginal cultural heritage duty of care under the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* (Qld) is proven to not provide protection to cultural heritage sites in Queensland from vegetation clearing under permits issued under the VMA.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage sites will continue to be destroyed by vegetation clearing in Queensland without additional protections in the VMA.

We trust that the Committee will consider these submissions in making its report to Parliament on the proposed *Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016*.

Kind Regards



Debbie Symonds
CEO – Olkola Aboriginal Corporation