



# **Longreach Regional Council**

Ilfracombe Isisford Longreach Yaraka

## **Submission**

### **Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018**

**Queensland Parliament**

**State Development, Natural Resources and  
Agricultural Industry Development Committee**

Prepared on behalf of Cr Ed Warren, Mayor; and  
Mr Paul Hockings, Director of Corporate Services

## Context/Background

### About Council

Longreach Regional Council (Council) is a Local Government Area covering 40,638 square kilometres in the state of Queensland, encompassing the communities of Ilfracombe, Isisford, Longreach and Yaraka.

Council is proudly apolitical; we pride ourselves on our ability to work constructively with members of State and Federal governments regardless of political affiliations.

### Three Pillars of Our Economy

Our Economic Development Plan, Outback Prosperity 2021, identifies actions across three key pillars of our region's economy; Agriculture, Tourism, and Livability.

Our region's struggle with what has become the worst drought in living memory is well reported and widely understood. While our plan aims to diversify our economy, a strong and sustainable agriculture industry will undoubtedly remain the most influential factor in our region's economic viability for the foreseeable future.

The Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 (the bill) has potential impacts on all three pillars of our economy.

Council recognises its role in protecting the economic sustainability of our community for the benefit of the entire Western Queensland region.

### Timeframe

The time allowed for consultation has not enabled us to appropriately engage with our community on the potential impacts of the bill. As a result our submission relies on the advice of key members of our community that are close to Council.

While these individuals have extremely relevant experience and possess in-depth knowledge of environmental and industrial factors, Council has not had the opportunity to consult with a broad cross-section of its community in the preparation of this submission.

## Comments

### Cyclical Uncertainty

The highly charged debate between competing interests has led to a degree of cyclical uncertainty in relation to vegetation management laws. The introduction and subsequent repeal of previous restrictions has not been conducive to the desired environmental and economic outcomes of stakeholders.

The bill in its current state looks set to perpetuate this cyclical uncertainty leaving landholders unable to effectively plan for a sustainable future.

## Gidyea

The constant encroachment of Gidyea within our bio-region is negatively impacting bio-diversity. If left unchecked, a worthless monoculture will develop as sandalwood, false sandalwood, boonaroo, ground bushes, herbages and grasses are overpowered.

It is paramount that a balance is struck to maintain a healthy biodiversity in the region.

## Mulga

The pushing of Mulga as a source of fodder is an essential practice within our bio-region during times of drought. Mulga is an even more invasive species than Gidyea and therefore must be controlled.

## Enforcement

Enforcement of Vegetation Management laws needs to recognise the genuine good faith in which landholders conserve and care for their land.

## Local Government

Local Government can play a role in developing evidence based policy that responds to the diverse needs of communities and bio-regions in Queensland.

# Recommendations

Council's recommendations to the Committee are that:

1. The Committee considers amendments to the bill that allow for the responsible control and treatment of Gidyea encroachment in the Western Queensland bio-region;
2. The Committee considers amendments to the bill that allow for the responsible harvesting of Mulga for fodder in drought-declared Local Government Areas of the Western Queensland bio-region;
3. The Committee considers provisions for enforcement of the bill that respects the work of landholders in conservation;
4. In considering amendments the Committee seeks to better understand the differing environmental impacts of the bill throughout Queensland's diverse bio-regions;
5. A comprehensive monitoring program is established for the vegetation management framework to better support evidence based policy; and
6. Local Government is consulted in the preparation of acceptable development codes.

# Contact

For further information, please contact:

Paul Hockings  
Director of Corporate Services  
P.O. Box 144  
ILFRACOMBE, QLD 4727

[assist@longreach.qld.gov.au](mailto:assist@longreach.qld.gov.au)

