

SUBMISSION

In providing this submission I refer directly to the key provisions of the legislation which may be amended.

We are fifth generation beef cattle graziers from Central West Queensland.

Part of our management plan includes the purchase of a small ex tobacco farm in Mutchilba with the plan / intention to thin the scrubby section , improve the pasture to

- 1. utilize the unusable area to graze and fatten cattle.**
- 2. stabilize the area with grasses. This area is badly eroded and is predominantly breakaways. If left in its current state, this section of the property will continue to deteriorate.**
- 3. have a second property for our succession planning program .**
- 4. create a valuable, sustainable property that we are proud of to pass on to future generations.**

If we cannot stabilize the breakaways, the washouts will exacerbate and render the whole section dangerous to stock, vehicles and the surrounding area.

Careful, selective clearing (thinning) will return this property to pristine condition.

On both of our properties, the trees are thickening increasingly due to minimal fires and lack of clearing. As the tree numbers increase so does the ground cover and grass DECREASE. This results in exposed soil becoming totally unprotected from wind and water erosion.

In our management program, we planned to strategically clear (regrowth suckers) certain areas at specific times of the season – our clearing has not been done to date as the seasons have not been right to do so. Another influence is the cost factor. Clearing / thinning is a very expensive exercise and is only ever undertaken when necessary and beneficial to the land.

To have the responsibility and opportunity to selectively clear our land taken away from us, hinders our proficient management practice.

This will render much of the country less viable, less productive and ecologically unsustainable. Vast expanses of land will deteriorate, topsoil will be lost – eventually out to sea. Topsoil MUST have groundcover to protect it from the elements. Ground cover must have sunlight to survive. Too many trees destroy groundcover habitat and upset the natural ecosystems.

Trees also need immense quantities of water to survive.

Without selective clearing, our most precious resource – water – will deplete at intense rates.

It has become a struggle to keep abreast of legislation. Logistically, when legislation is put in place after careful scrutiny, consultation and consideration of experience of generations of people involved, that legislation surely must remain firm? This recurring uncertainty ensures producers cannot plan ahead to make long term financial or management decisions.

I find it exhausting continually fighting bureaucracy and rehashing the same arguments. We primary producers strive to keep our land pristine – as have our forefathers - and plan to pass on a healthy property to our rising generations. Without selectively clearing (thinning), regrowth increases the vegetation thickness at an alarming rate that if left unchecked, will render our property unviable within just one generation.

The unchecked thickening of the trees causes vital grasses to deplete resulting in less ground cover to protect the top soil from erosion through wind and water.

Trees obstruct and hinder the smooth flow of flood water causing rapid erosion around their base and roots whereas ground with a good coverage of grass can withstand substantial flooding holding the topsoil firmly in place.

Grass / ground cover also retains water droplets ensuring maximum soakage occurs.

I find it nauseating that suburban and urban areas are allowed to clear one hundred percent (100%) of their properties but primary producers are hindered and harassed when they even partially clear / thin. Prime farming country near towns is being cut up, 100% cleared and buried under bricks and mortar. How is this considered ok or fair?

I find it odd that folk who have never set foot on the land under scrutiny can make such ill informed decisions that will crucify farmers, destroy the viability and security of such a vast resource ... the farming and grazing land of Australia .

We, the land holders, can ill afford the time taken to repeatedly fight the same issue but our very existence, the over regulated process of producing food for those in urban lifestyles depends on reversing the misinformed, misguided policies for Veg Management. We implore Government to investigate the real science from the real people who live on, love and rely on the very land entrusted to them – some for over five generations.

The very heart and soul of Australia depends upon consistent management from resilient people whose lives, livelihoods depend on taking the best care of their properties. These very same people feed the nation.

Signed

Ineke McDowall

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

21st March 2018