

From:
To: [SDNRAIDC](#)
Subject: SDNRAIDC committee
Date: Wednesday, 21 March 2018 3:37:52 PM

To whom it concerns,

I believe the proposed changes to vegetation management fails to achieve environmental outcomes. It fails to address the different ecosystems and the different interactions of naturally occurring events and systems within ecosystems across Queensland. The proposed changes fail to look after, protect or improve one of nature's most precious assets, the soil. It does not take in to consideration the impact high density tree populations have on the groundcover which in turn directly influences the health of the soil. Dense trees = reduced ground cover = top soil loss = erosion. This proposed vegetation management act fails to recognise the importance of a balanced environment instead focusing purely on tree populations.

The proposed changes highlight how completely out of touch with the real environment this government is. Ecosystems in south west Queensland are completely different then ecosystems in for example the Daintree rainforest. However, the proposed changes fail to recognise the stark contrasts in ecosystems, preferring instead to lump them altogether. What a disaster. There is huge variation in rainfall, soil nutrient level and temperature just to name a few. Where trees grow thickly throughout South West Queensland, (e.g. 60/70/100 + stems per hectare) ground cover cannot survive as the tree root system is far superior to that of groundcover (e.g. grass) and is able to outcompete groundcover for life essentials of water and nutrients. Furthermore, it's canopy blocks sunlight which groundcover also needs to survive.

Groundcover is extremely important as it holds the soil together and protects it from harsh environmental conditions e.g. wind and rain which cause top soil loss and lead to sheet and gully erosion. Groundcover supports a range of animals (insects lizards birds marsupials all depend on grass!) which play a vital part in the Australian food chain and ecosystem as a whole. The draft thinning codes will not help to create a balance between trees and groundcover. They will not create a healthier environment.

Another aspect is the effect of vegetation thickening on the communities, towns, businesses and people in these regions. Thick trees = no ground cover = soil damage. Producers need healthy soil to be productive. As our viability dwindles, we have less money to spend employing people and supporting local businesses. We employ machinery operators who have families. Family members are employed by other businesses within the town and all contribute to the economy of the town. There are other producers in this area who also employ machinery operators who also have contributing family members. If the proposed changes to vegetation management is put into place some of these operators will no longer have jobs. As farm viability continues to

be strangled by trees what will happen to our small town, our local mechanic, motel, post office and school??!

The proposed changes to vegetation management also hinder farmers seeking to drought proof their business with the use of mulga as a fodder source. It completely stops further development of high value agricultural projects. The changes severely hamstringing the ability of the next generation of farmers to enter into agriculture.

Three years ago, my partner and I (at the ages of 25 and 27) were excited to enter into the agricultural industry. We wanted to be young farmers. The next generation. We popped champagne when finally, a bank said yes and we secured a 2 million dollar loan to buy farming property. We knew we had a lot of work ahead, the property was run down. But we knew we had the support of government, primarily through the vegetation management act, to get it on its feet and become a viable farming business. The last three years we have worked hard to do this and have gone a long way in achieving this. The Labour government's proposed changes to vegetation management will cut us off at the knees.

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Nikki Cameron and Harley Mace