

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Bill to amend Queensland's land clearing laws  
**Date:** Wednesday, 21 March 2018 11:35:46 PM

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Dear State Development, Natural Resources & Agricultural Industry Development Committee,

I am intensely concerned about the severe threat to our natural habitat and the diversity and sustainability of our native wildlife populations arising directly and undeniably from the widespread and longstanding practice of land clearing in our state of Queensland. I am passionate about the ecological balance in our State and country, and the quality of life for future Queenslanders which I firmly believe would be detrimentally and irreversibly affected if such destructive land clearing is allowed to continue. I also believe that it is our collective moral obligation to arrest this devastation in order to preserve and strengthen the ecological future for all of our native flora and fauna. It is also incumbent upon us, including elected representatives, to no longer remain passive and allow private commercial interests to undermine our long term future, which is inextricably linked to an environment that sustains diverse and healthy ecosystems. The record of species extinction and rapidly declining numbers and vitality of populations of native species in our State is an utter disgrace, and unless we are prepared to leave future generations a legacy of ambivalence, unaccountability and irresponsibility that delivers even more widespread and irreversible destruction, we must have the integrity and strength to take bold, decisive and committed action now i.e. without any further delay or prevarication. Through my personal involvement in a range of community-based volunteering activities that focus on our native wildlife (monitoring, rescue, rehabilitation, release) and environment (habitat regeneration) which have involved significant travel in our State, I have seen first-hand the extent of the seemingly unfettered land clearing for agriculture, industry, infrastructure and urban development and toll on our native wildlife, and it is truly horrific. Anecdotally and scientifically, the evidence of the destruction is incontrovertible and a damning indictment of past and present practices, accountability, legislative effectiveness and appropriateness. I believe that if we wish to lay claim to the title of 'Smart State', that we must adopt practices and legislation relating to conservation of native fauna, flora and ecosystems and land management that supports, protects and strengthens rather than undermines and destroys our natural heritage.

I will to express my support for the passing of Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, although I wish to see some amendments to the Bill first.

I strongly endorse the Bill in seeking to scrap high value agriculture as a relevant clearing purpose, protect high conservation value regrowing woodlands, scrap the thinning code, extend Reef riparian areas, and to terminate current Area Management Plans.

I strongly endorse amendments to the Bill to totally remove 'managing thickened vegetation' provisions, to guarantee no new self-assessable code for thinning or new Area Management Plans were possible in the future.

I am disappointed that government is not proposing to substantially tighten up fodder harvesting provisions, including major restrictions and tying any clearing to official drought declaration.

I respectfully ask that the Committee examine options for recommending changes to the Bill and codes accordingly, and to ensure that the above reforms are fully translated into practice.

Even with these reforms, I believe there will be more work to be done in bringing about an end to remnant clearing in Queensland, to better protect threatened species including koalas and their habitats, and to comprehensively protect native woodlands. Failure to take these clear and concerted steps to ensure a sustainable and biodiverse future in our State would be unequivocally unforgivable, and (justifiably) morally indefensible in the eyes of our children and future generations. The challenge is at hand, and as the State Development, Natural Resources & Agricultural Industry Development Committee, you are thankfully in a position to help Queensland take a new, more sustainable and principled direction into the future.

Yours Sincerely,

Leonard Fitzpatrick

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