

SUBMISSION

I provide my submission in respect of the proposed Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 ("the Bill") to be included in the SDNRAIDC's detailed consideration.

This constant change in legislation severely impacts on the ability of farm managers to plan and implement effective long-term property and business management decisions. Ecological processes work in much longer timeframes and can be severely compromised when mismatching regulations are enforced. Farmers have long called for certainty with the vegetation management regulatory framework. I am totally opposed to continued uncertainty and attacks on the viability of myself, the long-term sustainability of my business as well as attacks on fellow farmers.

The impacts of the proposed changes to the Vegetation Management Act include:

- The purpose for High Value Agriculture and Irrigated High Value Agriculture will be removed;
- Extends Category B areas (remnant vegetation) and Category C (regrowth vegetation) to freehold land, and indigenous freehold land. Additional 862 000 Ha High Value Regrowth and water course buffers to all reef catchment, Burnett Mary, Fitzroy, Eastern Cape York;
- Thinning will require a Development Application to be lodged for approval;
- The purpose for High Value Agriculture and Irrigated High Value Agriculture will be removed.

In my opinion the Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 proposed changes are oppressive, restrictive and onerous and do not reflect the expert knowledge and understanding that landholders hold after decades of sustainable land management.

I do not in any way support broad scale land clearing or land degradation however I do not support and cannot operate with our industry being heavily regulated and debilitated by new oppressive vegetation management laws.

1. Other matters relevant to the Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 that the review committee should consider appropriate and worth some consideration

The land is the most significant asset to producers. It goes without saying, as producers, we operate and care about the land;

- Agriculture is the fastest growing industry in the country and Queensland is now the number one agricultural state in Australia. Harsh and unnecessary vegetation management restrictions put that at risk. Australian agriculture was the largest contributor to national GDP growth in 2016-17, contributing 0.5 percentage points of national total 1.9 per cent growth. (Source: Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences). Government cannot expect Queensland to remain the most productive agricultural state and constantly put barriers up for producers to get the most from their land.
- Vegetation was cleared on just 0.23 per cent of Queensland's land area in 2015/16 – that's less than one quarter of one per cent. And that doesn't factor in how much vegetation grew during the same period. Despite alarmist analogies about the number of football fields cleared, the Statewide Landcover and Trees Study puts the figure into context, revealing that just 0.23 per cent of Queensland's land area was cleared in 2015/16 (SLATS 20/15/16 report, page 21).
- We need legislation not to change every 5 minutes otherwise we cannot plan for the future. We need

more certainty than the length of a political cycle to create sustainable practices. We cannot get investment from banks or private investments due to constant change when governments change.

- Producers will develop sustainably if given the appropriate frameworks. We are professional people managing the land seeking best practice to increase our productivity. The majority of producers are doing the right thing. The Department of Natural Resources monitors land use changes throughout Queensland via satellite every 16 days, and in 2016/17, there were just three prosecutions of illegal clearing. (Source: Brisbane Times, 23 January 2018).
- We want the opportunity to drought proof our business for a sustainable future. Self-Assessable Codes have been very useful and more cost effective than lodging applications. The self-assessable codes help farmers ensure trees and grass stay in balance, avoid soil erosion and feed animals in drought.
- The push to get this Bill through parliament due to the “numbers” being right is not the reason to change legislation without the formation of an industry advisory committee.
- The proposed changes are grossly unfair to the producer and have a direct impact on our ability to create a viable, productive, efficient and sustainable business. The lack of compensation to producers is also unfair when the Government has already benefited directly from the producer through the purchase of the land, production and employment.

Signed:

Date:



22 March 2018