

SUBMISSION

I provide my submission on rejection of the changes proposed in the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 ("the Bill").

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 000ha High Value Regrowth and water course buffers to all reef catchment, Burnett Mary, Fitzroy, Eastern Cape York.
- Thinning will require Development Application to be lodged for approval. • The purpose for High Value Agriculture and Irrigated High Value Agriculture will be removed.

Describe the impacts the changes will make to stall agriculture, discourage investment, and increase costs and time to manage vegetation.

Category R & C

By being able to overlay with 'colour' (cat R or C) over category X, you're basically back-dooring and doing a landgrab over Category X (with whatever reason takes your fancy). It seems the end goal is to abolish any rights or certainty the landholder had over category x (by introducing Category R & C.)

The fact that you introduced the technique of 'overlaying' on category X, is of alarming concern – Category x isn't protected at all - all PMAVs have been compromised.

Category C (high value regrowth) – Your website states that if you had a certified PMAV, the new laws would not affect you, which at best is deceitful and at worst, a lie - because they do, in fact, affect certified PMAV's. This is because you have changed your regulations with regard to Category C. Basically the new regulations have essentially taken that land back to it's original, untouched state by having to leave any trees that are 15 years and older AND 100 immature trees! How is that being able to control our country?? What is to stop you from introducing an unreasonable regulation of say 500 immature stems?? Nothing. This is a deceitful way of taking back category C. Talk about new laws not affecting certified PMAVs is rot, you people do whatever you want over our land regardless of it's affects. These new laws are deceitful and sneaky. You nearly have to be a lawyer to be able to interpret them.

Self-assessable codes worked well – we had areas with approximately 4000 immature stems to 20 mature trees per hectare – this is in no way the natural state of that land which is not good for the environment or for food production. There was absolutely no grass coverage as the sun couldn't penetrate the tree canopy. Now that the area has been thinned, the grass coverage is phenomenal,

after one wet season, with about 90% coverage. This is highly effective for reducing soil run off as the grass roots hold onto the soil much more than the bare earth and tree roots.

Simultaneously we are drought proofing our place. Since thinning started over the past three years we haven't lost a beast to drought and we haven't had to supplement feed with lick. The grass coverage is still at about 75% after a dry season. Remember, the last two out of three years were some of the driest, with well below average rainfall... and we still have prolific grass coverage. The proof is in the pudding that thinning is a highly effective way of managing productive land while also caring for the environment.

By not being able to continue to re-thin this country, there will be dire consequences on the condition the land and our livelihoods. It will return to a wasteland of suckers which serves no one's purpose. There must be a balance between environmental concerns and producer's concerns, people must realise it can not be all about one or the other. The way these new laws are, it is all about the environment which is neither fair or just.

We live and breath the condition of our land, it is not in our interest to mistreat it. We are passionate about our environment and are experts in sustainable food production.

This expertise should be sought and considered when making sweeping changes in a land grab to secure votes. This is political not scientific, blind Freddy can see that. Landholders rights are being eroded and over governed at alarming rates and the line must be drawn or we will have no rights.

Signed: Elliot Des Finger

Date: 22/03/18