

The Committee Secretary,
State Development, Natural Resources and
Agricultural Industry Development Committee,
Parliament House,
George St.,
Brisbane,
Q., 4000.

Email: sdnraiddc@parliament.qld.gov.au

RE: Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Any further restrictions on High Value Agriculture or Irrigated High Value agriculture will be counterproductive to Australia's sustainability in the long term. Undoubtedly our most productive areas for food and fibre are on the coastal strip, but these areas are so rapidly dwindling due to uncontrolled urban sprawl. Developers enjoy unfettered ability to purchase high value rural land and modify its environmental character to achieve a capital gain. Why is the same right not afforded to rural landholders? If existing high value land is to be sacrificed to urban encroachment, how can we deny farmers the right to viably develop new areas to counter the coming shortfall in food production? Such a policy is unsustainable in a time of explosive population growth.

Regarding self-assessable codes there is no doubt the person most qualified to assess the environmental needs of any particular property is the landowner. He spends every day of every year on the property, watching everything that happens both in the short and long term, in comparison to a Government expert who shows up once for two hours, takes some photos and writes a report. A report which could impact the farmer's income, planning structure, viability and capital growth both now and for the indefinite future. It is in the farmer's best interest to maintain both environmental health and economic viability in equilibrium long term. Neither can exist alone.

In regards to compensation, if an individual or entity carries out an action which proves detrimental to the interests of the landholder, the landholder has the right to seek compensation. The same standard must apply when Government is the perpetrator. If legislation is enacted that did not exist previously, when the property was purchased in good faith, which results in negative economic effects on the landowner, then compensation must be payable. What is the situation when a landowner has used bank finance to purchase a property under existing legislation, but a subsequent change to that legislation causes a write down of the property's value, resulting in the bank reassessing its LVR and henceforth questioning the viability of the entire loan?

There should be no further restrictions on clearing regrowth. All the regrowth on our properties consists of woody weeds like Wattle and Brigalow, which if not controlled can have very nasty environmental outcomes. They quickly become a mono-culture, destroying all other plant forms in the area. Even the hardiest native grasses are destroyed and all animal life leaves the area

as no food is available. Eventually the trees thicken to the point they choke themselves out resulting in massive diebacks and a barren wasteland. While this is occurring over a period of several years, the land is completely unproductive as no grass can grow. Access is impossible as no vehicle can penetrate the trees and some areas of our property are now impenetrable even to a man on foot. It soon becomes a refuge for wild dogs and pigs, any attempt at control proving impossible due to the tree cover. All the while, wind and water erosion takes a heavy toll. The worst eroded areas are where the trees are thickest, as it is well established that grass prevents erosion, not trees. Trees cause erosion when they are uncontrolled.

Yours Sincerely,

J. K. Courte

Joseph Keith Francis Courte.