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Committee Secretary
State Development , Natural Resources
and Agricultural Industry Development Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

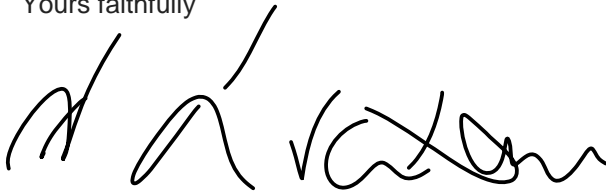
21st March 2018

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am resident of Australia, and grazier and landholder in Central Queensland, address below.

I have attached my comments on the Vegetation Management and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diana Graham', with a stylized, cursive script.

Diana Graham

Submission to the State Development Natural Resources and
Agricultural Industry Development Committee regarding the
Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

As a grazier I welcome the invitation to comment on the above Bill, and wish to support efforts through legislation to encourage restoration and regeneration of what we call our eco systems through outlawing the destruction of old growth woodlands, forests and high value regrowth.

The woodlands here include old growth and regenerating communities, and there is no doubt that our environment, overall, reflects great benefit from the remaining old growth and allowing cleared and treated areas to regenerate in the past twenty years: contented and productive cattle; the gratifying presence of numerous native flora and fauna species; the evidence in our streams and dams of the improvement in soil perforation: that is less 'runoff' during and after heavy rain and the retention and good quality of the water held; and good financial rewards.

The evidence of my eyes is supported generally by scientific studies, peer reviewed and respected: it is widely accepted that woodlands and forests not only work as lungs for numerous species including humans; retain, filter and importantly cool landscape streams; but are part of the 'system' that initiates, drives and builds fertility, for instance numerous of the fungi species become dormant without their presence.

Vegetation studies actually carried out here by government field officers support the above claims to well covered soils and biodiverse vegetation; native flora and fauna particularly arboreal fauna, diversity also having been underpinned by government/expert independent surveys.

It is saddening and concerning to observe in this very district the wilful destruction of not only regenerating eucalypt and acacia woodland; but old growth eucalypt woodlands. It seems that for the tree slayers the district's transpiration and mineral cycle, for instance, are not their responsibility or concern, and in upholding and pursuing their right of ownership - namely to destroy vegetation at will or to execute their vision of improvement, return on investment or ease of management – no thought or awareness of wider effect on the neighbourhood/district underpins these acts.

Submission continued

Effective legislation depends on community understanding and support, sufficient funding for surveillance as well as prosecution and constructive penalties for non-compliance. Critically and urgently though, additional funding building awareness and co-operation amongst those holding back attitude changes required to regenerate and respect natural ecosystems from which all life builds. Funding should be directed to experienced and successful educators and associations in the field of resource management known to be raising awareness of economic and environmental sustainability and holistic principals.

Government Officers need to be adequately funded and supported to track and deter illegal clearing, and rebuff attempts to find loopholes certainly; but regarding attitude, one influence dragging change is the policy of the major banks.

These banks claim to serve and be part of the community, albeit for their own profit; and not only is their influence and policy critical to the management of borrowing land owners and their employees, but indirectly to land developers and investors generally whose aim is to wring whatever money possible from their investment. The legislation could in fact go further by holding lenders responsible where they have either exercised support and influence in *fait accompli* acts where the benefit is perceived to outweigh the punishment; or failed to review clients loan applications or renewals evaluating evidence of sustainable environmental strategies.

Banks are well aware of problems of deforestation and denuded habitat but most will change their attitude only when expediate for compliance and their co-operation is vital.

Other influences on opinion are valuations not only carried out for banks, but also by government officers for rent and rate evaluations: the quaint disregard of bio systems, sustainability, and healthy landscape continue to ensure that tree presence unless around a homestead devalues land both for developmental and trading loans as well as sales. Leadership is required here and perhaps responsibility for causing or unduly influencing transgression should be penalised.

There is also need for leadership from the mining industry, in particular coal mining, since their compliance with their environmental conditions and permits for operating is expected by the community generally and any transgressions are particularly disliked by the farming and grazing community, and their special conditions often licensing high value habitat destruction or even weak or absent penalties for clearing transgressions infuriate local landholders burdened by coal dust and water draw down.

The point of the legislation amendments is to conserve high value vegetation and habitat and halt diminishing biodiversity. Healthy ecosystems are diverse; but they are also an integral part of larger systems, like a fractal, so interdependent with the immediate and far off landscape and if cut off from the connectivity provided by common woodlands and the life they support these protected areas become threatened by their isolation and unless the attitude of landholders, and for instance banks and valuers reflects environmental responsibility we are unlikely to halt these losses; yet a change of attitude could actually regenerate and develop rich and healthy landscapes.

Precipitation is crucial for land management and production, not to mention any life, and there are plenty of studies demonstrating that woodlands and forests and importantly their fungi are major attractors and triggers.

Assessment and eligibility of woodlands for thinning compliance seems rather complicated.

Experience here suggests that Nature intelligence acts to restore and often one vegetation community or pattern is preparing for another, change is normal and compacted land regenerates through a procession of pioneer woody plants etc. In addition, mixed shrubs are the common missing flora in eucalypt and acacia woodlands and prevalence for instance of *eremophila mitchellii*, rather than thickening, could be substitution for the loss of other shrub species due to pressure from browsing or soil pressure and hardening.

Rather than setting up this complicated thinning amendment compensatory payments for allowing the natural process to proceed seems a more effective way to avoid conflict and further vegetation mismanagement. There are a number of carbon credit schemes and companies offering them that could support much of this.

These comments are submitted to support retention and restoration of our woodlands and forests. I have drawn attention to attitude because this is clearly the reason that legislation is required, and all important as change maker.

There will be submissions by conservation organizations better equipped to evaluate complicated detail of The Bill and I leave it to them with my support in particular to Queensland Conservation and The Wilderness Society to do so.

I'm sure that there will be submissions from Queensland Wildlife, World Wildlife Fund, Queensland Birdlife and many more mentioning in detail Connectivity, High Value Habitat, Mixed Species dependence and much more. Again may I add my support. I am not a member or supporter of Ag Force.

