

## SUBMISSION

We provide our submission opposing the current changes being introduced to the vegetation management laws. We are fourth generation primary producers trying to provide a future for our three children who would also like the opportunity to be primary producers. We live on the edge of the mulga country in South West Queensland and rely on the mulga tree for fodder when we are drought declared.

Science based self assessable codes help farmers carry out the routine vegetation management practices necessary to sustainably produce food.

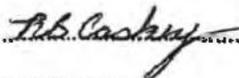
The self assessable codes help farmers ensure trees and grass stay in balance and keep our soils healthy. A healthy biodiversity is imperative for any farmer to be profitable. As primary producers our profit margins and our children's future depend entirely on the health of our soils and the general environment of our property. It is in our best interest to look after our land to the best of our ability. As fourth generation farmers we have learnt from the failures and successes of our forbearers. There is no one more experienced than us to know what our land needs to give the best outcome. Without the ability to thin, our trees return so thick that NO vegetation will grow underneath them. This creates huge erosion issues and biodiversity imbalance.

We live in a marginal rainfall area which depends heavily on the mulga tree for fodder. When our country gets dry we need to be able to feed our livestock this tree whenever there is a need. It is imperative to our bottom line that our livestock are fed BEFORE they begin to lose condition. Self assessable codes saves us time and allows us to begin feeding immediately.

We recall in 2005 prior to self assessable codes, during dry times, the department was inundated with permit applications and were not equipped to provide the correct permits to feed our livestock in a timely manner. This permit took three months to process. Due to these departmental delays our livestock were starving and dying and we were unable to save them. This is a massive blow to not only our profit margins but also to our own state of mental health. Watching animals die from preventable neglect is dreadful and very unnecessary. Returning to an assessment process will be a huge step backwards.

All these issues affect our profit margins. This in turn affects our country towns. Primary Producers are the main consumers in these towns. Without farmers our small businesses and local schools will no longer be viable. People will no longer be able to live out here.

We need stability and the ability to provide food to our country.

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Robert Caskey

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Kellie Caskey

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018