

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 change in legislation will severely impact on my ability to implement effective long term management decisions relating to this "Bill".

I am totally opposed to continued uncertainty and change that affect the viability and the long term sustainability of myself and my family, as well as my fellow primary producers.

My name is Bill Winks and I live on "Charlton" at Bollon, on the Mungallalla flood plain. I have been here on this property for forty four years so far. I, like many other families on the land, have a historic connection of generations here (five) with many extended family members operating properties in this district to this day.

I am of the opinion that we as a group (along with the rest) must be doing something right in Vegetation Management here in this region.

In no particular order I will outline to you how this "Bill" will affect me and my family and my opinion of the "Bill".

My references below will be predominately about the new thinning code.

*Thinning.

Thinning under the previous code was the only way that we could advance our management and production position in the Regulated areas. The timber retention rates that applied to the previous code made this cost effective, with the ability to increase production and also have a positive outcome on the Regional Ecosystems by making them less dense and more in keeping with the way our country was timbered historically.

I believe under the new code, this thinning would achieve very little benefit economically to the landholder and certainly not to the regional ecosystems I am dealing with. They will simply become too thick to be productive in there own right environmentally and will also become a haven for pest animals and noxious plants.

With respect to the people in the Herbarium, it would seem to me that we will turn some of these Regional Ecosystems (R.E.) into something different and not representing their present description.

Even in my lifetime one can witness some open grasslands turning into vegetation zones thicker than a native forest. (my opinion) You do not need to be a Botanist to make this observation.

* One size fits all.

This new system appears to be a one size fits all approach to be Queensland wide and only having limited overall timber thickness descriptions in order to suit the very different Bio-Regions Statewide. This would surely be too much to expect to have a great deal of relevance.

As recognised by the old codes there is great variation in these systems from region to region, but seemingly ignored this time round.

* Floodwater

In my situation we are affected by floodwater. Mostly where the floodwater goes in the "flooded" ground is beneficial. However, in the extreme events of 2010 and 2012 we had floodwater go where it has never been before, over some of our red country. The new growth of eucalyptus in this country has to be seen to be believed and when compared to my lifetimes observation would seem to be unnatural . This will take management to keep this country viable. If we cannot maintain this it will/is an unnatural wilderness.

My point here is that only those of us with properties on these floodplains are affected. Most of those out of the water do not have this problem. How can your new code address this? It simply

can't. The old code did, mainly because of the efficient way the Herbarium treated each R.E. in each Bio-Region.

Some producers have a distinct advantage as they do not have to deal with this.

***Safety and Cost.**

This factor is now a very real issue in the day to day management of our properties and rightly so. Those of us that are reared in these environments have a distinct advantage knowing this dangers. With the ongoing problem of age creeping up and with less people willing to work here, this will be a very real issue as time goes by.

Put simply, how are we supposed to get stock out of these thickets with any degree of certainty. The old way will work. Time.

This will add a great deal of cost to the operation.

*** 400 Ha. limit per lot.**

This goes with the thinning bit.

It also raises another matter with the overall ability of people being somewhat able to improve their lot.

Remember that there are a considerable number of producers that were tangled up in the broad scale clearing business and were unable to improve their lot because of that change and also because somebody made a judgement that put them out of the ballot then.

There are properties in this district with an overall timber retention of three to fifteen per cent. They are deemed to be o.k. by comparison.

The old thinning code enabled some to improve their productive position that otherwise were unable to because of the 2006 laws.

This 400 ha limit will again penalise those with the most amount of Regulated Vegetation.

These same people are being singled out again.

Some property owners will be relatively unaffected by these new regulations, so in a district like the one I live in you will have a group of haves and have nots.

*** Unproportionate Contributors.**

Through no fault of their own, you will have one group of landholders contributing more to this environmental issue than others.

In fact you will have the majority of the people in this State contributing nothing to your preferred outcome, to fix or repair your perceived position on other matters that are referred to in the press regularly. In fact anything to do with the word carbon.

So, we have one portion of the community being held responsible for another portion of the community by stealth.

Is this not penalising a minority for the benefit of a majority?

*** Mapping.**

In two previous Parliamentary Committee hearings in 2013 and 2016, one of the only things they agreed on was the problem with the accuracy of the Regulated Vegetation mapping. This problem still exists and you persist on us as consumers to put up with it.

Even your Departmental Officers recognise this but have to work within a flawed framework.

I had occasion to visit The Herbarium in Brisbane in late 2016, to be told by a member of the staff there that some of the R.E. mapping, was indeed inaccurate, and in my case out by up to 300/350 metres in places. They were not one bit surprised. They also recognised that some land types and R.E.s in my case were simply wrong.

Dr. Gordon Guymer told me at this time, that all this could be fixed and corrected if they given the funding to do it. He had in fact been trying for years to get this funding.

*** Reef Connectivity**

It is only my observation and opinion that we have been dragged along in this region by the debate about land clearing having a detrimental effect on the reef.

I will reiterate that these regulations need to be considered region by region, to reach a sensible outcome.

* Encouragement.

We need flexibility in these laws to encourage the younger ones to be able to make a go of this and become a part of this rewarding pastime of life on the land .

Reasonable thinning codes enabled this in my area and now this will not be so. These R.E.s will be locked up forever under this legislation and become totally unproductive, not only for the individual but also environmentally.

* Invasive native scrub.

As land manages we need to be able to control and manage these to keep these Regulated systems going.

If you insist on us not being able to thin the predominant canopy species, we really need to be able to manage these invasive species.

This will then enable these R.E.s to flourish.

There are other parts of this new Legislation that do not affect me to the extent of others.

I non the less support these producers in this instance and no doubt they will air their knowledge on these matters.

These regulations will have a detrimental affect on them and for this reason I am against this new regulatory framework.

This submission is in no way complete and I would like to leave you with a couple of points.

This is a very emotive issue and I am dismayed to say the following.

I did not think that in my lifetime I would see and witness a system that would not allow progress and development in a particular sector of the community.

Where are we headed?

I also believe and observe that some Vegetation Management management in the Eastern fringes is called Progress.

Out here it is called Environmental Vandalism.

Yours faithfully

Billy Winks