

SUBMISSION

In providing this submission I refer directly to the key provisions of the legislation which may be amended.

1. Removing High Value Agriculture and Irrigated High Value Agriculture from the Vegetation Management Framework

Background

- High value agriculture and irrigated high value agriculture refers to cropping.
- This change will take away the ability of land holders to clear small areas of land to develop farms.

1. The removal of High Value Agriculture (HVA) and irrigated HVA (IHVA) affects farmers in regions differently, with those in the north particularly hard hit. Throughout northern Queensland energy and protein become limiting in cattle diets during the dry season and this can cause farmers issues with stock survival and welfare through years of drought. HVA and IHVA permits have provided farmers in northern Queensland with the opportunity to grow fodder and grain for supplementing in the dry season and finishing off stock for market.

The current rules for high value agriculture have been the basis for planning and budgeting, including for drought. Removing or amending these will cause hardship both financially and emotionally for those affected. Limiting their ability to farm and remain sustainable.

Our population grows. The amount of food required grows. Our farming land increasingly is restricted. Our family farmers diminish in numbers.

2. Retaining Self-Assessable Codes

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

The self-assessable codes have helped farmers ensure trees and grass stay in balance, avoid soil erosion and feed animals in drought. Farmers have not been required to obtain permits for work done under the self-assessable codes, but they have been required to notify the Queensland Government.

We have used self assessable codes for fencing and had planned to use it for thinning.

The present code allows thinning by very strict criteria. The proposed Development application is more red tape and further restricts our ability to manage thickening vegetation and therefore weed infestation.

<p>3. Including High Value Regrowth as an additional layer of regulation under the Vegetation Management Framework on leasehold, freehold and indigenous land</p>
<p>Wanting to further limit farmers control over regrowth by limiting it to regrowth that has been recleared only in the last 15 years is very unfair on a farmers ability to budget and remain sustainable. You cannot expect a farmer dealing with drought, flood, government regulation and banks, to be able to financially manage regrowth in such a specified timeframe. That money might not be there at the time. It could quite possibly have been used to feed stock now. That regrowth, when cleared, will then help feed those same stock.</p>
<p>4. Increasing Category R regrowth watercourse vegetation to include additional catchments in the Burnett Mary, Eastern Cape York and Fitzroy Great Barrier Reef Catchments.</p>
<p>Background</p> <p>In addition to the high value regrowth layer being added back onto freehold and indigenous land, landholders will also be impacted by overnight changes to the regrowth watercourse mapping and the extent of essential habitat mapping. There is currently a strong focus on developing Northern Australia. The Queensland State Government Vegetation Management Framework is preventing these farmers from developing agriculture projects.</p> <p>The farmers in the north need to develop agriculture projects. This will greatly impact the plans and sustainability of both indigenous and other australian groups.</p> <p>In our experience on our land types, good grass cover is very beneficial in preventing sediment runoff, whereas trees often cause erosion as rain gauges out the soil around their base and creates sediment runoff.</p>
<p>7. Other matters relevant to the Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 that the review committee should consider appropriate and worth some consideration</p>
<p>Our family having been on the land for generations (140 years) we have proved our ability to be good farmers and custodians. We are efficient, hardworking and productive. We love and manage our land. We look after and maintain the health and well being of our stock. We do our best to control weeds and invasive plants. And control feral animals.</p> <p>Property owners and others in the industry should be rewarded for best practice not punished for it.</p> <p>There has been no industry consultation prior to this amendment being introduced.</p>

- **Farmers are here to feed people. Why denigrate us. We want to own our land into the future and have more generations of family farmers. We know our land. Let us work it sustainably as we know we can.**

Signed:	Andrew Morris Hawkins
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