

## 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 constant change in legislation severely impacts on the ability of farm managers to plan and implement effective long-term property and business management decisions. Ecological processes work in much longer timeframes and can be severely compromised when mismatching regulations are enforced. Farmers have long called for certainty with the vegetation management regulatory framework. I am totally opposed to continued uncertainty and attacks on the viability of myself, the long-term sustainability of my business as well as attacks on fellow farmers.

The impacts of the proposed changes to the Vegetation Management Act include;

- The purpose for High Value Agriculture and Irrigated High Value Agriculture will be removed.
- Extends Category B areas (remnant vegetation) and Category C (regrowth vegetation) to freehold land, and indigenous freehold land. Additional 862 000ha High Value Regrowth and water course buffers to all reef catchment, Burnett Mary, Fitzroy, Eastern Cape York.
- Thinning will require Development Application to be lodged for approval.
- The purpose for High Value Agriculture and Irrigated High Value Agriculture will be removed.

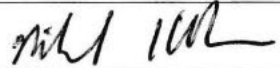
Describe the impacts the changes will make to stall agriculture, discourage investment, and increase costs and time to manage vegetation.

Before the Newman government's changes to the veg management laws around half of our property was classified as remnant vegetation. Because of the thick vegetation choking any grass out we were unable to use this land for livestock production. In 2014 we put in a notification and began thinning under the self assessable codes. We completed our thinning in 2015 and was audited and passed. Since then we have seen a remarkable transformation. What was once just thick scrub with bare ground underneath is now a mix of different grasses and scattered trees. Where once we were experiencing erosion and sediment runoff during rain events we now have nearly 100% ground cover. What water that does run off now contains very little sediment. We have also noticed flocks of budgerigars, cockatiels and different parrots have moved into our thinned country. All birds that live on grass seed. With the extra grass that our property, grows our livestock carrying capacity has been increased by around 50%. The extra grass we now grow in our thinned country has made it easier to withstand drought conditions and has allowed the rest of our pasture to rest and regenerate. The extra livestock numbers have improved our bottom line meaning we are now able to employ outside labour and contractors.

The new thinning code enacted on the 8<sup>th</sup> of march this year bears little resemblance to the previous code. The fact you can only clear 10% of the remnant vegetation on each property means it will be hardly worth doing. The new codes also require that far more trees are to be left per hectare. It is difficult to see how country thinned in this manner would result in any increase in productivity or improved environmental outcomes making it uneconomical. They also cast doubt over whether we will be able to maintain our thinned country or if it will just revert back thick unproductive scrub.

Under the old laws we put in a notification, attended field days and demonstration days and then were audited. There was a sense the Department of Natural Resources was out to help us

do the right thing. Under the new laws it is a return to the old days of trying to make things as difficult as possible and then trying to catch us out.

Signed:	
Address:	
Date:	22 - 3 - 18







Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Sub Bills 2018 No 472

