

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.

My personal opinion is below:

The proposed changes to the Vegetation Management Act:

- WON'T fix the Great Barrier Reef. Trees in many soil types cause erosion as rain water gouges out the surrounding soil and it ends up as sediment run-off. However, good grass cover prevents sediment run-off. It is important to note that trees are never cleared beside water ways anyhow.
- WON'T fix climate change (whole other topic).
- WON'T improve our agricultural sustainability. We use our "high value agricultural land" to produce quality food and fibre. We would like to continue to do so. If this is taken away there is no way that we can still produce the quantity or quality of food and fibre that makes Queensland thrive whilst using best management practices.

The changes:

- WILL hinder our ability to produce top quality food and fibre.
- WILL increase the disconnect between city and country
- WILL increase costs such as electricity for EVERYONE, not just producers.
- WE already work closely with our local Department of Natural Resources and Mines. We know their names, we have their mobile numbers in our phones.
- WE are not scared to ask questions
- WE are not arrogant to think that we know everything there is to know but we listen to science rather than innuendo.

Once again, Queensland agriculture is being used as a pawn in the ridiculous game of politics. It hardly seems fair that our governing body chooses to pick on the sector where there are far more hectares than people. You can fit small countries into our rural political boundaries and we scratch our heads as to why we are always fighting an uphill battle.

Children are watching their parents struggle with workloads, the red tape that increases that workload and then you add on the unknown delights of Mother Nature just to keep you on your toes. Parents are then watching their children smarten up to the fact that life can be a whole lot easier if you just stay in town and get a job where you are paid regardless of if it rains or not, water comes out of a tap when you turn it on and you don't have to milk the cow every morning. Politics doesn't concern your everyday life and there is safety in numbers if you need them.

In saying that, the ones that stay are passionate and want to stay because they love what they do and are good at it. Queensland outshines all other states in Australia as far as the product that we produce and the way we produce it. Best management practices are not something that is talked about but is implemented and there are systems in place to work with those who are having trouble doing so. Science is a part of our daily lives. We are environmentalists at heart. Our businesses wouldn't survive if we didn't manage our land effectively.

I hope that you take into consideration what the new changes will do to the future of Queensland agriculture.

SIGNED: Patricia Gretton

DATE: 22/03/2018