

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
<p>Hughenden is the main town of the Flinders Shire. The Flinders Shire covers 42 000 sqkm or 4 200 000 hectares.</p> <p>Approximately 1/3 of the Shire is Mitchell Grass Downs ecosystem which has scattered trees on downs and watercourses. Vegetation Management is not an issue for this land.</p> <p>The remaining 2/3 of the Shire is composed of Desert Uplands and Basalt Tablelands, which is typically called Open Forest type ecosystem.</p> <p>From my knowledge and discussions with people from these areas approximately 1% (420sqkm or 42 000 hectares) of the Shire has been cleared for pasture improvement.</p> <p>The Flinders Shire Council has been working with a potential investor who wants to establish an intensive horticulture project. The irrigation area is approximately 160 hectares of a proposed 300 hectare site. Of this 160 hectares there will need to be some clearing of native vegetation to enable the horticulture to proceed. 160 hectares represents 0.0038% of the Shire.</p> <p>Consideration needs to be given to areas such as the Flinders Shire Council which has had minimal clearing (approximately 1%) to allow such developments to proceed.</p> <p>The Proposed Vegetation Management Legislation could jeopardise this potential development which will provide additional options for food and fibre to Australian consumers.</p>
2. Retaining Self-Assessable Codes
3. Including High Value Regrowth as an additional layer of regulation under the Vegetation Management Framework on leasehold, freehold and indigenous land
4. Increasing Category R regrowth watercourse vegetation to include additional catchments in the Burnett Mary, Eastern Cape York and Fitzroy Great Barrier Reef Catchments.
5. That no compensation will be payable to landholders subject to added layers of regulation – high value regrowth, regrowth watercourses and essential habitat during transitional arrangements
6. Increasing compliance measures and penalties under vegetation management laws.
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>The potential horticulture project for the Flinders Shire as proposed would result in more than 100 FTE employment opportunities. This is a major economic boost to the Shire of Flinders which presently has a population of about 1600.</p> <p>The Shire's population has been reducing due to drought and removal of railway jobs by Aurizon.</p> <p>The new legislation will add a possible \$100 000 cost to the application process for this project.</p>

This is due to the project now needing to become a Co-ordinator's Project and could be subject to a full EIS application through the Co-ordinator General's Department.

I wish to emphasise that very small parcels of land in a very large Shire can bring major economic development and diversification of industry. I would request that the proposed Vegetation Management and other Legislation excludes such developments to allow for economic development in rural areas and increase the agricultural output of North Queensland.

Signed:	Brendan V McNamara
Address:	
Date:	22/3/2018