

SDNRAIDC

From: Paula Peeters
Sent: Thursday, 22 March 2018 8:25 AM
To: SDNRAIDC
Subject: Submission regarding the Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

Categories: SUBMISSIONS

Dear State Development, Natural Resources & Agricultural Industry Development Committee

I am deeply concerned about the loss and degradation of native vegetation that has occurred in Queensland since European settlement, and continues in the present day.

Native vegetation is part of our heritage. Many of the native plant, animal and fungi species which survive in these ecosystems have made the long journey with the Australian landmass over millions of years. Their lineages stretch back to a time before humans even evolved, let alone reached Australia 60,000 years ago. New species are still being discovered, and for many known species we understand very little about their biology, ecology, distribution and conservation status. The continual destruction and degradation of native vegetation-based ecosystems through clearing, thinning, weed invasion and inappropriate fire regimes shows a contempt for both the history of our country, and its future.

Native vegetation also plays an important role in storing carbon and protecting the soil from erosion. Conserving adequate native vegetation on our landscapes, and especially in riparian areas, helps to improve water quality and reduce sediment runoff. Protecting native vegetation in the Great Barrier Reef catchments is vital for maintaining the health of the Great Barrier Reef.

I write this as a concerned Queenslander, a nature-lover, a person who wants to celebrate the heritage of this amazing country, someone concerned about the sustainability of our future, and as an ecologist. I don't think it's worth living in a place that does not value trees, birds, clean water, healthy ecosystems, and does not take care of its resources, climate and heritage.

Yes we also need to protect and nurture our human community, but to do this we need healthy ecosystems and sustainable management practices. In certain parts of Queensland there is scant evidence of either of these things. Instead there is large-scale land clearing and poor land management. Large areas of erosion and scalding. Rivers muddy and choked with sediment. Native plant and animal species declining and disappearing before our eyes. This is shameful in 2018 when we have the knowledge, the wealth and the capacity to do better.

So this is why I support the passing of Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. But I also wish to see amendments made to the Bill first, to further strengthen the protection of native vegetation.

High Conservation Regrowth should receive the same protection as Remnant Vegetation, and the High Conservation Regrowth category should include vegetation that has not been cleared in the last 15 years or longer.

The native vegetation in all riparian areas should be fully protected.

High value agriculture should not be used as a purpose for clearing. Neither should thinning or fodder-harvesting during drought. The evidence for vegetation thickening in Queensland is highly contentious, and has been used as a justification for vegetation clearing for far too long.

Thank you to the Committee and those drafting the legislation for working to improve the protection of native vegetation in Queensland. I hope that your work leaves a lasting and positive legacy for all Queenslanders, present and future.

Sincerely,

Paula Peeters