

March 22/03/2018

Committee Secretary
State Development , Natural Resources
and Agricultural Industry Development Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

I am writing for you support in changing the current Vegetation Management Act, to regulate land clearing in Queensland.

I am part of a community group of local constituents based in Brisbane's North. We are passionate about protecting Queensland's biodiversity to ensure sustainability, protection of the environment into the future and to mitigate the effects of climate change and global warming that affect not only Queenslanders, but citizens around the world. To tackle some of these larger environmental issues such as climate change and global warming, we have come to the understanding that changes do need to happen at a local level to engage communities in taking action on the environmental issues that affect, impact and matter to them. We united with the help of the Wilderness Society, to campaign on environmental issues that matter to us. However, our efforts can only go so far, and so we are counting on the government to help us achieve our goals in ending high rates of land clearing in Queensland. We want to see the State government pushing for more regulations within the Vegetation management Act.

Land clearing is important to us because it directly affects the environments in which we live. We want to protect the species and the climate that are being negatively impacted by soaring land clearing rates. Of concern, is that fact that Statewide Landcover and Tree Study statistics (SLATS) from 2013-2014 show that 296 000 hectares of land was cleared, up from 78 000 hectares in 2009-2010 (SLATS, 2016). Based on these statistics and using satellite mapping, environmental groups have estimated that since 2013, more than one million hectares of native woodlands have been cleared, which is a size four times the that of the ACT (McCarthy, 2017).

Land clearing has direct impacts on climate change and global warming. Independent modelling by carbon accounting firm CO2 Australia, reveals that by 2030, if the current levels of tree clearing continue in Queensland, cumulative tree clearing emissions could be up to 268 million tonnes higher than current Government estimates. This is the equivalent to operating an additional 4 coal-fired power stations during the same period. Land clearing also causes drought through reduction of rainfall and increases erosion and sedimentation run-off into marine habitats such as the Great Barrier Reef (Neldner, et al., 2017; The Wilderness Society, n.d.). Threatened species are vulnerable to this kind of climate change.

There have been drastic implications for native species due to land clearing. For example, for Queensland's population of koalas, a 53% decline has been estimated over the next 15-21 years, caused by land clearing, subsequent habitat fragmentation, droughts and fires (Neldner, et al., 2017). Other species of flora and fauna at risk include ooline trees, ormeau bottle trees, swamp tea-

tree trees, the black-throated finch, pale imperial hairstreak butterflies, the condamine earless dragon and the mahogany glider (Neldner, et al., 2017).

We would like to see a return to stronger protections in place under the current Vegetation Management Act.

At the end of the day, more land clearing, means more carbon emissions and less habitats for endangered species of flora and fauna. It also means less green spaces and oxygen for us all to enjoy. Our future, as well as the future of the next generation is at stake.

Yours Sincerely,

Ruby Riguet

Member of The Wilderness Society Metro North team

References

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