

SUBMISSION

The Morven Progress Association Inc is in support of the current Vegetation Management Act 1999 and rejects the proposed changes in the Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018.



Morven sits within the Murweh Shire region which is predominantly made up of Mulga Lands. Mulga is a fodder tree that farmers use to feed livestock that regenerates quickly. The proposed changes to the act will prevent farmers from managing their land effectively in turn negatively impacting the Mulga Lands ecosystem and the farmers businesses. Our region relies on the Agriculture industry with Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing having the largest number of registered business's in the Murweh Shire (48.1%) and it also employs the greatest number of people in the region at 17.9% *Queensland Government Statisticians Office (2018)*.

The Morven Progress Association Inc is greatly concerned for their community's sustainability if the proposed Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 is passed on April 22 2018. There is no doubt that not only farmers but every business within the Murweh Shire will be impacted negatively if the proposed changes are passed.

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
The removal of High Value Agriculture (HVA) and irrigated HVA (IHVA) affects farmers in regions differently, with those in the north particularly hard hit. Throughout northern Queensland energy and protein become limiting in cattle diets during the dry season and this can cause farmers issues with stock survival and welfare through years of drought. HVA and IHVA permits have provided farmers in northern Queensland with the opportunity to grow fodder and grain for supplementing in the dry season and finishing off stock for market.
2. Retaining Self-Assessable Codes
Science-based self-assessable codes help farmers carry out the routine vegetation management practices necessary to sustainably produce food and fibre.
The self-assessable codes help farmers ensure trees and grass stay in balance, avoid soil erosion and feed animals in drought. Farmers are not required to obtain permits for work done under the self-assessable codes, but they are required to notify the Queensland Government.
3. Including High Value Regrowth as an additional layer of regulation under the Vegetation Management Framework on leasehold, freehold and indigenous land
The re-inclusion of High Value Regrowth (HVR) as an additional layer of regulation on leasehold, freehold and indigenous land is an overt grab by Queensland Government in search of targets for meeting international treaties such as the Paris Protocol. In 2009 when initially introduced, this HVR layer was prepared hastily in a 'desk-top' mapping exercise with associated errors including areas of non-native vegetation (such as orchards) and bare earth.

4. Increasing Category R regrowth watercourse vegetation to include additional catchments in the Burnett Mary, Eastern Cape York and Fitzroy Great Barrier Reef Catchments.
In addition to the high value regrowth layer being added back onto freehold and indigenous land, landholders will also be impacted by overnight changes to the regrowth watercourse mapping and the extent of essential habitat mapping. There is currently a strong focus on developing Northern Australia. The Queensland State Government Vegetation Management Framework is preventing these farmers from developing agriculture projects.
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
The issue of compensation arises with the addition of these layers. Queensland farmers should be compensated for land that is no longer able to be productive or used as part of your property development.
6. Increasing compliance measures and penalties under vegetation management laws.
The Bill potentially breaches fundamental legislative principles (FLPs) as outlined in section 4 of the Legislative Standards Act 1992.
Legislation should have sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals and consequently should not adversely affect rights and liberties, or impose obligations, retrospectively.
In addition, penalties have effectively been tripled indicating there is a sense the Government does not think farmers who mistakenly clear vegetation are being penalised enough.
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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers/producers will develop sustainably if given the appropriate frameworks. • Farmers/producers need legislation not to change every 5 seconds otherwise we cannot plan for the future, • Farmers/producers cannot get investment from banks or private investments due to constant change when governments change • Farmers/producers want the opportunity to drought proof their business for a sustainable future • Self-Assessable Codes have been very useful and more cost effective than lodging applications

Signed:	
Address:	
Date:	22/3/18