

TJ & LG Bongers



21 March, 2018

Committee Secretary,
State Development, Natural Resources and Agriculture Industry Development Committee,
Parliament House,
George Street,
BRISBANE. QLD. 4000

Dear Sirs,

Submission to Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

We hereby provide our submission to reject the changes proposed in the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 ("The Bill").

The many recent changes in legislation severely impacts on the ability of farm managers to implement and plan effective long-term property and business management decisions. We have listed below reasons why the added restrictions could, and would, largely destroy our ability to operate our property in an efficient and productive manner:

- Ecological processes work in much longer timeframes and can be severely compromised when mismatching regulations are enforced.
- Farmers and graziers have long called for certainty with the vegetation management regulatory framework. We are totally opposed to continued uncertainty and attacks on our viability, the long term sustainability of our business, as well as attacks on fellow landowners.

The impacts of the proposed changes to the Vegetation Management Act include the following which, we believe, could and would impact on our operations:-

1. Thinning would require a Development Application to be lodged for approval.
2. The extension of Category B (remnant vegetation) and Category C (regrowth vegetation) areas to freehold land, and to water course buffers to all reef catchment areas, will deny us the right to maintain our land in a productive capacity.
3. The purpose for High Value Agricultural land will be removed, denying the ability to improve our productivity.
4. The ability to effectively maintain the productivity of the land by control of feral weeds, grasses and pests, will be compromised by the inability to control remnant vegetation and regrowth.

It should be noted that the spread of noxious weeds from unmaintained land through wild dogs, feral pigs, wallabies and other marsupials will be impossible to control as thickening of vegetation continues. By allowing landholders to maintain and control regrowth on their own properties not only improves the viability of the land for grazing purposes, but also significantly improves the environmental aspects of the land. When regrowth and thickening is controlled we have a much better chance of controlling the wild dog, feral pig and excessive wallabies through control of their breeding habitats.

We have not “cleared” the land, merely “cleaned it up”, and in doing so have left a 25 acre patch of original scrub which is fenced off according to local Landcare standards for best environmental and wildlife results. Since the mesh fencing was installed, the “cleaned up” land has slowly recovered from the devastating effects of plague proportions of marsupials flogging the land out to bare gravel, resulting in serious erosion problems on our steeply undulating land as well as loss of valuable pasture. The erosion problems are much more difficult to fix and it is imperative that maintenance of undergrowth and regrowth needs to continue to prevent further damage and the reoccurrence of the original problem.

It is our understanding that, had we been subject to the changes you are proposing, the land would have remained in its degraded state as a result of 50 years of Government neglect and would now be eroded, devoid of grass, fully infested with noxious weeds (parthenium), unviable grazing land unable to even support the wildlife causing the devastation.

Please, do not deny anyone else the ability to improve the viability, the ecology and the environmental aspects of their land, as we have done and are continuing to do.

Please, applaud the landholders’ efforts, rather than treating the custodians of the land as vandals.

The greatest vandalism in our area is by the Government because of the failure to control feral weeds and animals as all private landowners are required to do.

Yours sincerely,

Tim and Leesa Bongers

