

SUBMISSION

I provide my submission on rejection of the changes proposed in the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 ("the Bill").

This constant change in legislation severely impacts on the ability of farm managers to plan and implement effective long-term property and business management decisions. Ecological processes work in much longer timeframes and can be severely compromised when mismatching regulations are enforced. Farmers have long called for certainty with the vegetation management regulatory framework. I am totally opposed to continued uncertainty and attacks on the viability of myself, the long-term sustainability of my business as well as attacks on fellow farmers.

The impacts of the proposed changes to the Vegetation Management Act include;

- The purpose for High Value Agriculture and Irrigated High Value Agriculture will be removed.
- Extends Category B areas (remnant vegetation) and Category C (regrowth vegetation) to freehold land, and indigenous freehold land. Additional 862 000ha High Value Regrowth and water course buffers to all reef catchment, Burnett Mary, Fitzroy, Eastern Cape York.
- Thinning will require Development Application to be lodged for approval.
- The purpose for High Value Agriculture and Irrigated High Value Agriculture will be removed.

Describe the impacts the changes will make to stall agriculture, discourage investment, and increase costs and time to manage vegetation.

1. Purpose for HVA and IHVA to be removed.

Currently, HVA and IHVA permits provide farmers in northern Queensland with the opportunity to grow improve fodder and grain for supplementing in the dry season and finishing off stock for market. By complete removal of this permit system, and this is what it currently is, a permit system, that is regulated and managed by science, for producers to improve even a small area of their property for a fodder crop to manage dietary shortfalls especially in the northern part of the state.

This new Vegetation Management framework will prevent any clearing for HVA /IHVA in our far northern regions, (Northern Gulf, Cape York Peninsula for example) in a region where minimal clearing except for road, airstrips and infrastructure has occurred. It includes significant areas of tenure such as Aboriginal Freehold for the purpose of agriculture. Projects on good soil types are and have been identified. An example the co-development of bananas in Hopevale. A crop requiring a high labour input. Where has the jobs, jobs, jobs war cry of the current government got to do with this proposed legislation??

High value Agriculture is a high input high return business, requiring significant labour resources. This is a potential manufacturing and export industry that even with careful management and good practice guidelines will not be happening..

With this bill being legislated, why have they continued with any rhetoric regarding any proposed irrigation project. Nullinga Dam for example. Save the paper Premier, just tell people now that these new laws will jeopardise any further expansion of the Mareeba Dimbulah Irrigation area.

Removing HVA/ IHVA from the Vegetation Management Framework will take away the ability of landholders to clear even small areas of land to develop farms. Suitable Land and water are very much a limited resource with a limited capacity to produce food. If Australian wants to feed its growing population and remain a viable agricultural nation it is important that further restrictions are not imposed. Many area of Queensland but particularly the far north and north west will be stymied of potential and hope for these communities and productive landscapes.

2.

Extends Category B areas (remnant vegetation) and Category C (regrowth vegetation) to freehold land, and indigenous freehold land. Additional 862 000ha High Value Regrowth and water course buffers to all reef catchment, Burnett Mary, Fitzroy, Eastern Cape York.

This "overlay" covers much of Queensland's valuable agricultural land and potentially valuable agricultural land held in what was hoped to be tenures that provided some surety to develop. There is no problem with requiring this development be constrained by good science but this proposed bill is a lock out and likely for the purpose of meting UN /Kyoto Carbon storage protocols.

This increase in Category R provisions is a further restriction on development in Northern Queensland, which is in stark contrast to the development imperatives contained with the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia.

The science is completely unproven on the necessity to include ≥ 50 metre buffers along streamlines.

In fact, a study conducted in Queensland and published in 2016 shows that grass is a far better assimilator for nitrogen to prevent leaching into waterways.

The current bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef is not caused by high nutrient runoff from agricultural lands.

3. Thinning will require Development Application to be lodged for approval.

It obvious that the proposed regulations do not consider the ability for our landscape to renew. Go to any mulga block that has not been managed after any clearing and you will see a thicket. A WPHS nightmare to muster stock. The term and tenure is for agriculture use so the profitability must be maintained. The devil will be in the Development application.

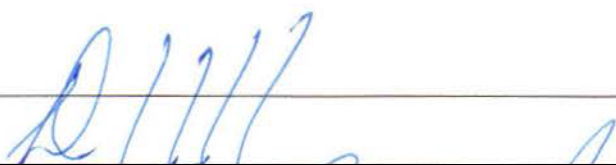

Producers flouting self assessed codes need peer pressure and or compliance action pure and simple. The small minority are responsible for 90% of regulation.

4. Extend the protection of high conservation value regrowth vegetation on leasehold, freehold and Indigenous land.

The Bill meets an election commitment to provide an option to landholders to request an area mapped as a category X area to be converted to a category A area, where the area contains remnant vegetation or high value regrowth vegetation on the ground. The Bill makes no change to the status of Category X on a Property Map of Assessable Vegetation. Clearing of Category X will continue to be exempt of any requirements under the framework

A certified Property Map of Assessable Vegetation (PMAV) must be not negotiable unless initiated by landholder. Of particular concern an overlay of Cat C is visible on our property map overriding a certified map showing sections as Cat X. Despite assurances from DNRM staff, it is very concerning that this may well be introduced into the legislation.

High Value regrowth has been classified from clearing committed in 1989 back to clearing committed in last 15 years. (2003) . The economic cycles of the pastoral industry make maintenance clearing irregular however it is vital to maintaining the productivity of many properties. Regrowth unchecked will ensure the property will become unsustainable economically. Properties will be unworkable, jobs and cash flow within communities will dry up unless the population is on the dole.

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