

# Balkanu

Cape York Development Corporation P/L

ABN 67 075 711 198

21 March 2018

Committee Secretary  
State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane Qld 4000  
Via email - [sdnraidc@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:sdnraidc@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear Committee Members

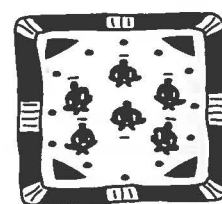
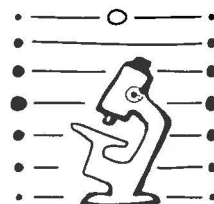
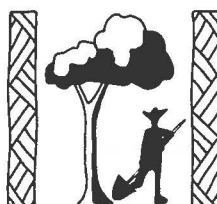
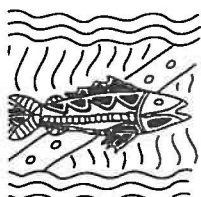
## RE: VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018

This submission relates to the Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation is a Cape York Indigenous-owned and controlled organisation. Our primary role is to assist the Aboriginal people of Cape York develop their economic aspirations. The Indigenous people of Cape York are the most disadvantaged in the State.

The previous MP for Cook, Billy Gordon, recognised the extraordinary injustice of the previous Vegetation Management legislation proposed by Labor, and refused to support it. After Mr Gordon was instrumental in forcing the shelving of the legislation, Cape York people had an expectation that the State would properly engage with communities and its representative organisations to develop a workable legislative and management regime to meet the reasonable needs of Cape York. Serious and well-constructed engagement means on-the-ground consulting with communities, working with the Indigenous Regional Organisations to ascertain future needs of the communities.

However, the Government failed to step up and meet this fundamental democratic requirement to formulate policy based on the needs of the people who would be most dramatically affected.

Unfortunately, the proposed legislation is now even more draconian than that opposed by Mr Gordon, and amendments proposed by the former Member for Cook, on advice of his Indigenous constituents, have not been taken into consideration.



22 March 2018

The Committee Secretary

State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee

page 2

A city-based government that doesn't even bother to find out the needs of its most disadvantaged constituents has formulated this piece of legislation.

We respectfully but forcefully request that the bill be shelved until proper, thorough engagement of Cape York's indigenous people, facilitated by the Indigenous Regional Organisations, is undertaken.

Much of the economy of Queensland is driven by land cleared many years ago, but Cape York is not allowed to reap the same economic benefits. Cape York's indigenous people abate more carbon through savannah burning projects than is created through land clearing on Cape York; in fact, all of the land clearing on Cape York emits less carbon than is created by the universities in Brisbane, yet this goes unrecognised.

The failures of government to recognise the economic development needs of indigenous communities on Cape York make up a long list.

They include failure to enable economic development in local government plans; failure to conduct proper planning to identify areas for economic development; the need to ensure that tenure arrangements enable economic development. The list goes on.

We vehemently reject the bill in its current form, and urge the Government to adopt our recommendation to thoroughly investigate the aspirations and future needs of Cape York indigenous people to build viable and vibrant communities. The Indigenous Regional Organisations stand ready to facilitate this necessary process.

We look forward to the opportunity to present our concerns to the committee at a public hearing.

Yours sincerely



Gerhardt Pearson  
Executive Director

Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation