

SUBMISSION

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

- High value agriculture and irrigated high value agriculture refers to cropping.
- This change will take away the ability of land holders to clear small areas of land to develop farms.

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.

Much of North Queensland has not been developed for cropping, except for cane farming areas on the coast and high value agriculture on the Atherton Tableland. Vegetation was cleared on just 0.23 per cent of Queensland's land area in 2015/16 – that's less than one quarter of one per cent. And that doesn't factor in how much vegetation grew during the same period.

On the blacksoil downs country where we live, vegetation thickening is a huge problem. Areas that were almost devoid of trees 50 to 100 years ago - and this was natural, not due to clearing- now have vegetation cover of 50%, or more.

The steady thickening of our grasslands reduces the grass cover and carrying capacity of the land and causes more erosion. Grass cover provides more protection to the soil during heavy rainfall events that trees do.

The removal of High Value Agriculture also limits our ability to farm additional areas of land. With our son recently joining our family business, we had plans to expand our cropping area to help provide for his growing family. It also means additional food can't be grown to feed a rapidly increasing world population.

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 Government is essentially adding an extra regulation over FREEHOLD/indigenous land, do we tell people who live in the city they cannot remove a tree to put in a pool, a new pavement or shed in their backyard? People have invested heavily in their properties and this is essentially taking their livelihood away from them.
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
How can the government steal our profitability away from us and provide no compensation?
6. Increasing compliance measures and penalties under vegetation management laws.
<p>The Bill potentially breaches fundamental legislative principles (FLPs) as outlined in section 4 of the Legislative Standards Act 1992.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Tree clearing for housing and industrial development is allowed to continue willy-nilly. Why should farmers and graziers be forced to carry the burden of complying with 'green' targets?</p>
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. • We need legislation not to change every 5 seconds otherwise we cannot plan for the future, • We cannot get investment from banks or private investments due to constant change when governments change • We want the opportunity to drought proof our business for a sustainable future • Self-Assessable Codes have been very useful and more cost effective than lodging applications

Signed:	Heather Garside
Address:	<div></div>
Date:	22/03/18