

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.

The changes to the vegetation management laws in Qld in 2018 will severely impact on the graziers in the mulga lands of South West Qld. The feeding of mulga to stock in the mulga lands on my property is integral to our grazing management. It is part of the everyday management of our cattle. Therefore, it is in the best interest of our business to maintain the mulga trees on our block to ensure feeding of mulga to stock for generations to come. This we have done for the last 20 years via fodder permits. We have seen the mulga thicken on our property over the past 20 years. This is as a result of the removal of goats from the land, the improvements to fencing, and the improvements to water in the form of a reticulated system in place of the bore drains. The bore drains were replaced through the GABSI scheme in 2002 and through a privately funded scheme of our own in 2007. These improvements have allowed us to control the impact of the stock on the land and the vegetation and allowed it to thicken profusely. All this improvement has come at a cost in money and time to our business. The future of our business depends on harvesting mulga for fodder and these new laws will prevent us making decisions on the everyday management of our land.



The top photo shows the vegetation in a stock route camping reserve that has been left intact and never managed. The bottom photo shows the vegetation adjacent to the stock route camping reserve and the thickening when it has been managed for fodder.

The mulga lands are extremely important in the supply of stock to the markets in the east. When conditions are dry in the eastern parts of Qld destocking occurs. Graziers in the mulga lands, as long as they have fodder permits in place, are able to continue breed cattle. When it rains in the eastern areas we are then able to supply the market with store stock, effectively operating as a “meat basket” for the domestic and export market.

Queensland’s population has been growing quickly and this growth is projected to continue. The medium series projection puts the state’s population at approximately 6.6 million people by 2031. By 2056 Queensland’s population is projected to be 9.1 million people, double the size of the 2010 estimated resident population (ERP). Even assuming low migration and low natural increase, the population will rise beyond seven million by 2056 (Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1).

SOURCE: Australian Bureau of Statistics 3101.0 and 2011 edition Queensland Government population projections.

This legislation WILL prevent us running a viable business and will impact the production of beef that is needed to feed the increasing population in the future.

The towns of Charleville and Cunnamulla service the properties within the mulga lands areas. Without these properties the business’ and populations in these towns will decline. Rural towns rely on the agriculture around them remaining viable in order for them and their populations to remain and be sustainable.

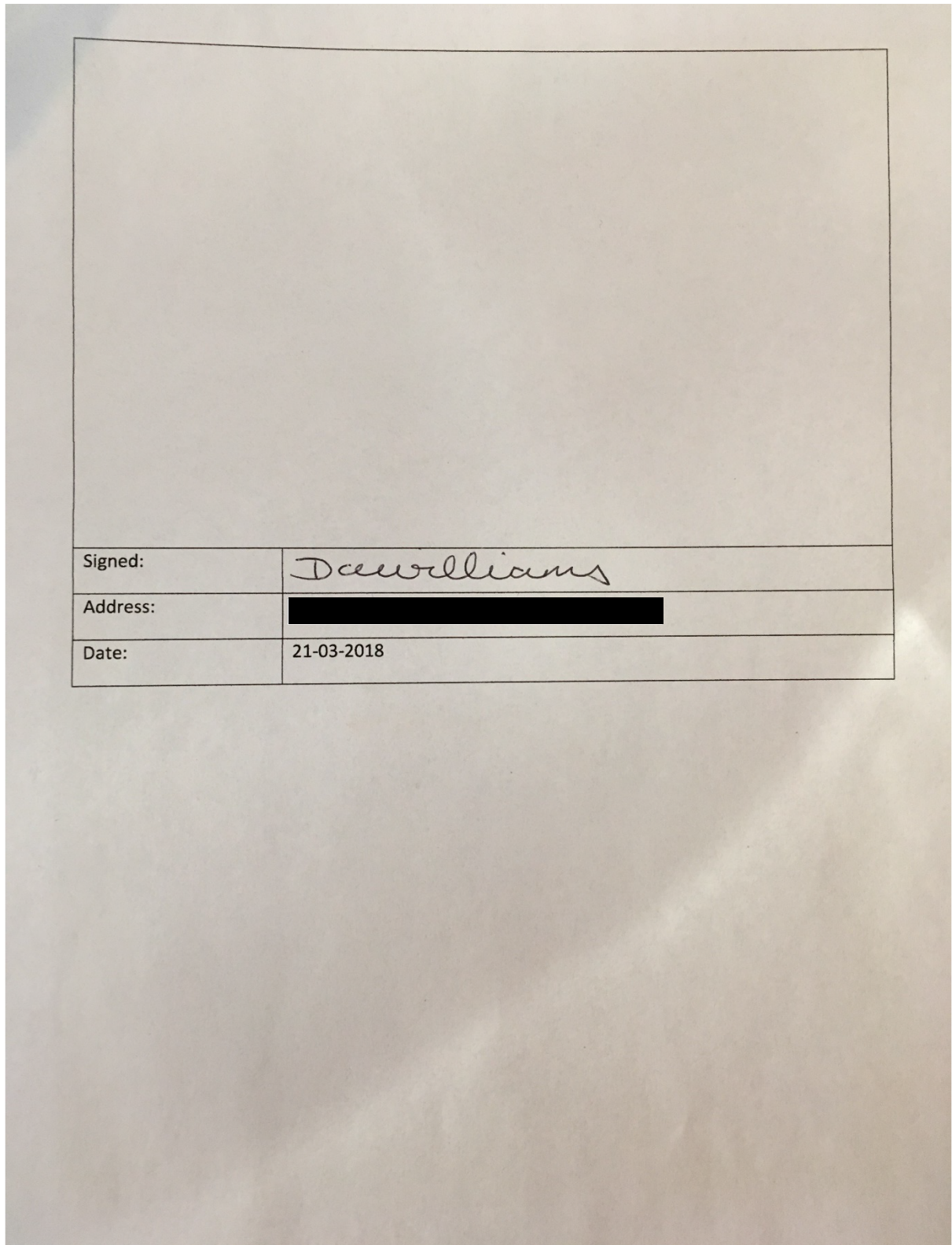
Has the Qld Government done any modelling on how these new laws will affect agriculture? I believe that this question was put yesterday at a parliamentary committee hearing and I believe that the answer was “No”. I find this incredible and wonder what then is driving these laws if this hasn’t been done. I feel that this is inequitable if the decision is being made without examining all stakeholders affected by these laws.

I do not have any scientific evidence to back up my submission but only that I have seen the vegetation thicken significantly on my property over the past 20 years while it has been under my management. I have read some evidenced based data on the mulga lands by scientists Dr Bill Burrows and Dr Ian Beale but their research has not been taken into account or recognised by the department at any time.

There is no future for me and my family on our property if these laws are set in place. We have suffered many regulations over the past 20 years but the impact of this proposed legislation will put us out of business as we cannot continue without being able to continue to fodder harvest to an amount that will keep our stock alive. These new laws will not allow that.

Below I have attached 2 photos which are typical of the land type of my property and show the thickening of the vegetation





Signed:	<i>Daeuilliams</i>
Address:	[REDACTED]
Date:	21-03-2018

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Date:	21-03-2018