

20 March 2018

Committee Secretary
State Development, Natural Resources
and Agricultural Industry Development Committee
Parliament House
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Brisbane Qld 4000
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Dear Committee

Submission to the Inquiry in Vegetation Management and Other Legislation
Amendment Bill 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the above Inquiry.

I am a white woman in my mid 40s. I vote Green and I value the amazing natural heritage that indigenous peoples have maintained & looked after for thousands and years. It would be a terrible blight on white people if we were to now let the land be exploited over a short period of time, for the purpose of economic gain. I realise that for many, land is a source of survival, and currently many farmers feel that the destruction of land is an important method of making ends meet. But there are other ways – and so many innovative farmers in Queensland already doing things differently.

Since the land clearing since laws and policies were seriously weakened by the Newman LNP government there has been a surge in land clearing. Farmers have begun to rely upon land clearing as part of their daily work and way to make money.

Its time to change these habits.

Native woodlands, native wildlife and the iconic Great Barrier Reef should be afforded better protection.

I strongly support the government's intention to substantially strengthen Queensland's land clearing laws.

Overall, I note and endorse the Bill in seeking to achieve:

1. The removal of high value agriculture as a relevant clearing purpose and the scrapping of that permit process;
2. The re-protection of high conservation value regrowing woodlands, under a broader definition that includes ecologically significant woodlands that are 15 or more years old;

3. The scrapping of the Thinning 'self-assessable' accepted development clearing code;
4. The extension of riparian area protections to the last three Great Barrier Reef catchments;
5. The capacity to reclassify Category X into Category A;
6. The reinstatement of Riverine Protection Permits; and
7. The termination of current Area Management Plans.

While I would prefer see the total removal of provisions for 'managing thickening', and would strongly endorse changes to the Bill in that regard, I recognise that a second-based option is to have the revised processes and tests that would be established under the Bill as a means of delivering a greater level of protection for some native woodlands.

Despite the above support, I am keenly disappointed that the Bill includes provisions that could be used to allow new self-assessable codes (Clause 4 of the Bill), create new Area Management Plans (Clause 14 of the Bill), delay the removal of existing Area Management Plans for up to two years (Clause 14 of the Bill). And see reverting protected woodlands to unprotected Category X (Clause 13 of the Bill).

I am also disappointed that government is not proposing to substantially tighten up fodder harvesting provisions, including major restrictions and tying any clearing to official drought declaration. This would help farmers extensively, and would be a responsible use of our natural assets.

Finally, I urge that with the passing of the Bill, protected vegetation, be it Category B (remnant), Category C (high value regrowth), or Category R (Reef riparian), is fully and properly mapped and protected across Queensland.

While not a specific focus for this Bill, I am also very interested in additional specific action under the Planning Act to better protect threatened species habitats in key areas of Queensland, including koalas and their habitats in southern and central parts of the state.

Yours sincerely

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