

From:
To: [SDNRAIDC](#)
Subject: Submission on the Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018
Date: Tuesday, 20 March 2018 8:23:54 AM

The new laws should address the problem of "panic clearing" or "pre-emptive clearing". It should do this in three ways. First, the laws should be enacted as soon as possible and no extension for further discussion should be allowed. Second, the law should include measures taken to prevent any government benefit from such panic clearing, for example, by making such land ineligible for any government subsidy for reafforestation related to carbon farming or the like. Third, the laws should create a two tiered system of land tax and allow for a similar differential for council rates, so that a higher rate of tax or rates is levied on "cleared" land as opposed to land covered with native vegetation. The latter would be a just measure as land clearing is a private benefit but public harm.

The new laws should also address land clearing in suburban and peri-urban areas. There should be a prohibition on "moonscapping" with total removal of all trees throughout an area of new subdivision, with tree removal allowed only the the actual house site with a small margin around and for the tarmac surface of the new subdivision roads. The new laws should also prohibit the destruction of larger trees on suburban blocks where there the only reason for the destruction is the aesthetics of a new owner. The laws should also allow councils to introduce lower rates on well vegetated suburban blocks, subsidised by a higher rate levy on bare blocks. This would be a just measure as suburban trees are a public good from the point of view of aesthetics and urban climate amelioration, but the high turnover of ownership of suburban houses means that just one owner in a sequence of a number of owners can abort the general benefit to suburban life of living in a leafy suburb. I understand that these additional suggestions to the new vegetation management laws might take some time to implement. This should not be allowed to delay the implementation of the existing laws, but they should be flagged so that people are aware of that there will be future disincentives for tree clearing that can be backdated to the date that this has been flagged.

To: Queensland Parliamentary Committee Members

Dear Committee members,

The material in the paragraphs below "***" is from a standard form letter suggested by the Wilderness Society and I fully support their advice. However, I want to add several additional points:-**

The new laws should address the problem of "panic clearing" or "pre-emptive clearing". It should do this in three ways. First, the laws should be enacted as soon as possible and no extension for further discussion should be allowed. Second, the law should include measures taken to

prevent any government benefit from such panic clearing, for example, by making such land ineligible for any government subsidy for reforestation related to carbon farming or the like. Third, the laws should create a two tiered system of land tax and allow for a similar differential for council rates, so that a higher rate of tax or rates is levied on "cleared" land as opposed to land covered with native vegetation. The latter would be a just measure as land clearing is a private benefit but public harm.

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Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018.

Queensland is in the midst of an escalating deforestation and land clearing crisis, with a Gabba-sized area of forests and bushlands destroyed every three minutes. It is critically important that this new law ends this crisis and protects our beautiful forests and bushland, as well as our native wildlife.

I welcome the improvements that are in this law: the end of permits for so-called High Value Agriculture, the removal of the main self-assessable code for thinning, the modification of the fodder self-assessable code, and the redefinition of High Value Regrowth to include regrowing forest and bushland that is 15 years of age and within 50 metres of watercourses in Great Barrier Reef catchments.

However, the test for these laws is: will they bring down the out-of-control rate of bulldozing in Queensland? Will they protect the state's wildlife?

These laws must end broadscale clearing and protect all remnant and High Conservation Value regrowth forest and bushland in Queensland,

as outlined in the election commitment. I call on the government to make publicly available data that shows that these laws will achieve those commitments.

In addition, the following improvements to the law must be made:

- Ensure that no threatened species habitat is able to be bulldozed, and no “of concern” regional ecosystems are able to be bulldozed.
- End all bulldozing of mature forest and bushland for ‘thinning’ (which will still be allowed under a Development Approval, existing Area Management Plans and self-assessable regrowth codes).
- End bulldozing of mature forest and bushland for so-called ‘fodder harvesting’ unless it is lopping individual branches. At the very least, it should be proven to be necessary due to being a drought, and proven to be ‘low ecological impact.’
- Protect all regrowing forest and bushland that is threatened species habitat and that surrounds watercourses (riparian areas)—as was promised in the election commitment.
- Protect the regrown remnant and High Conservation Value Regrowth that is currently marked ‘exempt’ and is not protected in Category X on PMAVs.

Regards,

– David Kault