




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2017

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT (CLEARING FOR RELEVANT PURPOSES) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (11.39 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Vegetation Management Act 1999 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Vegetation Management (Clearing for Relevant Purposes) Amendment Bill 2017 [\[2133\]](#).

Tabled paper: Vegetation Management (Clearing for Relevant Purposes) Amendment Bill 2017, explanatory notes [\[2134\]](#).

The policy objectives of the bill are to amend the Vegetation Management Act 1999 to create an obligation on the chief executive to issue an information notice where an application for clearing, as assessed under section 22A of the act, has been rejected and remove 'grazing activities' from the definition of 'high value agriculture clearing' to ensure that it is considered a relevant purpose in the chief executive's consideration of an application to clear under the act.

These objectives have been developed to address gaps within the existing legislative framework that constrain the ability of primary producers to clear land for legitimate purposes and enable access to a reasonable appeals process. Currently grazing is not considered a relevant purpose for high-value agriculture clearing. However, it is considered a relevant purpose for irrigated high-value agriculture clearing. This limits the ability of a grazier to establish sources of feed to improve the productivity of their operations.

In order to develop a more profitable and competitive domestic and international agricultural industry in Queensland, graziers must have a range of options for cultivating and sourcing feed. Although this bill broadens the scope of activities that are an acceptable reason to undertake clearing, the existing legislative and regulatory framework provides adequate mitigation against detrimental environmental impacts. Furthermore, the farm management practices of producers ensure a high standard of environmental management across the industry.

Currently there is no right of appeal or review for a person who has made an application under section 22A of the act where that application has been rejected. The only basis for appeal or review pursuant to the Vegetation Management Act 1999 is if the section of the act dealing with the decision requires an information notice be given with the decision. Currently graziers are unfairly restricted in the way they can manage their land to feed their cattle and make their business profitable. Graziers face extremely restrictive laws that require them to invest significant time and money just to prove to the department that they should be able to feed their cattle.

The current laws are unfair and they are holding our agriculture industry back. The bill ensures that graziers are allowed to undertake high-value agriculture clearing. This will allow dryland farming of improved pasture for grazing. This will reduce costs of growing feed which will make their businesses

more profitable and competitive. Importantly, environmental protections remain in place under the bill. A grazier must still apply to undertake this type of clearing and the department will have an opportunity to review every application.

The bill also addresses big gaps in the existing legislation around appeals for farmers who have had their clearing application rejected. The bill requires the department to issue an information notice to a farmer who has had their application rejected. The farmer can then use the information notice to trigger a formal internal appeal of their application.

Agriculture has been given a bad name by inner-city types who have no idea about farming or land management. When these people think of farming they think of horns and pitchforks and barren landscapes where nothing can survive. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—KAP) (11.43 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Linard): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee.