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Submission to the Senate Committee for Climate Change

The following submission relates to aspects of (1) – The impact of native vegetation laws and legislation greenhouse gas abatement measures on landholders, including –

- (a) any diminution of land asset value and productivity as a result of such laws:
- (b) compensation arrangements to landholders resulting from the imposition of such laws:
- (c) the appropriateness of the method of calculation of asset value in the determination of compensation arrangements: and
- (d) any other related matter

Preamble:

My family and I have lived on our current property, in Western NSW's - Cobar Shire, for almost half a century. We come from a pastoral tradition in the district. Over the 47.5 years I have been here I have seen droughts, destructive bush fires and flooding rains and despite that I love living in this environment and on our property. Over the last 20 years I witnessed and lived with the single most insidious and destructive force yet, I have seen successive attempted land grabs – by Government to take from us what we have worked hard to improve and maintain. The first being the attempt by the Department of Defense in 1983 the subsequent but less straight forward attempt means with the enactment of legislation beginning with the introduction of Sep 46 by the State Government with the full backing of the Commonwealth Government.

During my 47 and a half years on this property I have met all of the obligations and live within the frame work of the legislation. I have watched with confusion and dismay as the bureaucrats flounder and contradict themselves as they attempt to police and enforce a rapidly changing and confusing framework which has been carefully crafted to conceal policy that changes land use. References are made to other policy and regulations that

would require a person to have a law degree to be able to fully comprehend the implications of signing instruments such as a PVP (Property Vegetation Plans). These instruments attach to the Title Deeds of the property much the same as a mortgage or a caveat.

We in the Western Division have been issued with cultivation licenses in perpetuity, but to manage invasive native scrub that does not occur on licensed cultivation country would require a PVP. The bureaucracy knows that unmanaged invasive native scrub is destructive to the landscape – why else would they allow clearing under a PVP. Therefore a PVP is a management tool to control people not scrub, and a trigger to erode equity in our property. The PVP is an instrument that will reset our cropping licenses from schedule A (in perpetuity) to a 10/15 year time frame which is untenable and takes equity out of our enterprise.

In relation to 1 (a)

In light of the information in the preamble the imposition of States Laws that have been requested by the Federal Government have caused us to have a depreciating asset and so too does the Nation as the land is being damaged and abused by current policy.

In relation to 1 (d) - Unjust and Unfair treatment of Australian Farmers

We have neighbors that have cleared crop paddocks on their properties that they are unable to use. One bureaucrat said that he would ratify and enable a cultivation license and a subsequent incumbent interpreted the act differently and said “no” he would not permit cropping.

My brother was persecuted by the bureaucracy for clearing a paddock in the mid 80's. The case was won by my brother and costs awarded against the Western Lands department because they were unable to produce a current copy of the act under which they were prosecuting him – the Magistrate said that the Department should have a copy of the Current Act in their Cobar Office – not one with hand written annotations.

We are now seeing another campaign of persecutions in the Nyngan, Tottenham area, where some of our best young and enthusiastic farmers are being target by a malicious bureaucracy backed by both State, and Federal agency for just trying to make an honest living and feed our Nation. Just a bit Un-Australian don't yu think Mate!

It is most concerning for all owners of property within Australian when the Federal Government gets around fair treatment of its citizens by getting the State Governments to do its bidding to get out of paying just terms compensation.

In relation to 1 (b) and (c)

It is still very questionable whether this policy is going to take us as a nation to where we need to be.

Locking up huge tracts of NSW and QLD under woody weeds that cause degeneration of the whole eco-system leaving the area a virtual bio-diversity desert. Destroying peoples livelihoods and closing down small communities – when you could still sequester soil carbon without the current Vegetation Acts

I refer you to the work being done by Dr Christine Jones and the Stipa Group with conservation farming and direct till and no kill – no till cropping. Some of these practices will deliver a productive and biologically diverse landscape that supports native animals, farmers, feeds our population and adds to GDP.

There are shining examples of well managed landscapes in the Cobar area that have implemented water spreading and increased the grasslands bringing back animals and grasses that have even surprised our local WCMA (Western Catchment Management Authority) personnel.

Please consider where you are taking us as a Nation .

Thank you for taking the time to consider this submission.

PL Dunne