

SUBMISSION

1st. March 2010

Senate Finance And Public Administration Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Email: fpa.sen@aph.gov.au

Re: Native Vegetation Laws, Greenhouse Gas Abatement and Climate Change Measures.

Dear Senators,

The effect of the Native Vegetation Laws on individual landholders can be determined by comparing two identical timbered properties say in 1950 being managed in different ways .

Let us say that the owner of one property decided to totally clear his property as was his right before the Native Veg. Laws, he now has the right to manage his property as he thinks fit. He may graze animals, he may grow crops, he may even decide to revegetate the property with a timber plantation and receive carbon credits as well as timber crop when he decides to harvest. If the plantation was not viable he could clear the land again and pursue any other endeavour he may wish.

Compare this to the other property owner who instead of clearing his entire property decided to maintain a significant proportion as timber. He may not have had the resources to clear all his land, he may have thought that his timber would one day be a valuable asset for sawmilling, he may have even thought that maintaining some timbered country would be good for the environment, or if he was clairvoyant may have thought that one day this timber will be worth a lot as a carbon sink or all of these and possibly others.

Now compare the effect the Native Veg. Laws had on these two properties.

The first property suffered no affect. He was still able to manage his property as he saw fit, including obtaining carbon credits for revegetation.

The second property after maintaining the native vegetation for many years, which we now know was very beneficial in reducing CO₂ in the atmosphere is now not allowed to clear his land, nor can he claim carbon credits for maintaining the trees, and he may only be able to harvest some of the timber under very strict harvest laws. His property has been effectively removed from his control and massively devalued compared to the first property. This property owner later discovers that the Australian Gov. has been credited with billions of dollars of carbon credits for stopping the clearing of his land. This credit belongs to his property; he was the one that didn't clear the land as was his

legitimate right but chose not to. He was the one that reduced CO2 levels over the past years, yet his efforts go unrewarded and in fact his rightful reward has been stolen by the Australian people for their benefit.

Freehold land is land that has been bought from the Crown so that the owner may manage and improve that land as he sees fit. To run a business for profit. Different owners will manage in different ways, some for short term profit, others for long term profit or capital gain. Only time will tell which management practise will at any time be the most profitable. It is very unfair that when someone maintains a property for long term, or unforeseen profit, that that profit or value is confiscated without compensation.

What are future landowners going to think about improving their land if they see that in the past valuable assets conserved for future use have been confiscated without compensation?

One wonders what future agriculture in Australia has. Our Governments are constantly imposing laws or regulations that impose costs or restrictions on our farmers, but are quite happy to import the same goods from countries without the same costs in the name of free trade. To have fair dinkum free trade we should have free trade in Labour and services and the same rules for local producers as those we are prepared to import from.

To take something of value and not pay, is in common law theft, and the perpetrator should be punished and the victim compensated.

James A K Ramsay