

COVER SHEET FOR PUBLIC SUBMISSION ON

***NATIVE VEGETATION LAWS, GREENHOUSE GAS ABATEMENT AND
CLIMATE CHANGE MEASURES***

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1(a) Impact of native vegetation laws and legislated greenhouse abatement measures on land holders, including – any diminution of land asset value and productivity as a result of such laws

Native vegetation laws – asset value

- uncleared regrowth causes reduction in grass cover resulting in soil erosion hence a reduction in value of land
- restriction of ability to carry out basic works – eg construction of contour banks to control soil erosion
- loss of economies of scale
- restrictions could make our properties uneconomic, thereby reducing their value
- loss of equity
- restrictions result in a loss of productivity which leads to a loss of value

Native vegetation laws – productivity

- loss of carrying capacity and crop production
- reduction in weight gain per day
- more pressure put on balance of property in order to generate adequate income thereby adversely affecting it
- adverse effect on existing proven management practices
- as land owners we are still responsible for weed & pest control on restricted areas but are limited by the manner in which this can be achieved particularly in reef catchment areas

Greenhouse gas abatement and climate change measures – asset value

- increased costs lead to reduced profitability which in turn leads to a reduction in property value
- potential to render our properties unviable

Greenhouse gas abatement and climate change measures – productivity

- increased costs leading to reduction in herd size or development works
- reduction in productivity e.g. food, fibre
- potential to render our properties unviable
- reduction in or loss of management ability on farm

1(b) Impact of native vegetation laws and legislated greenhouse gas abatement and climate change measures on landholders, including - compensation arrangements to landholders resulting from the imposition of such laws

Native vegetation laws

- as land owners we want the restoration of our (previously existing) rights, particularly fee simple, to give us certainty of title
- compensation may assist in financial terms, but does not address adequately or at all, other aspects of the dynamics of land ownership such as inheritance
- any compensation should include a component for loss of income over (a substantial period of time) *plus* a component for reduction in capital value (based on a 4:1 ratio of undeveloped to developed land) *plus* a component for loss of opportunity, stress, emotional distress and humiliation

1(c) Impact of native vegetation laws and legislated greenhouse gas abatement and climate change measures on landholders, including – the appropriateness of the method of calculation of asset value in the determination of compensation arrangements

- compensation is considered a very poor alternative to restoration of (previously existing) rights, particularly for fee simple land
- asset value alone is not an adequate or reasonable criteria for calculation of compensation, which should include a loss of income component (calculated over a substantial period of time), as well as a component for stress, emotional distress, loss of ‘face’ and humiliation and loss of opportunity.

1(d) Impact of native vegetation laws and legislated greenhouse gas abatement and climate change measures – and other matters

- We, as land holders with many years of farming experience, as were generations of our families before us, find these laws an invasion of our rights and an insult to our abilities to manage to our land in a way that has proved sustainable over the years. As business people it is in our interest to look after our land and keep it productive.
- High costs of implementing laws are causing business and family uncertainty – will it be possible to pass on the family farm to our children?
- Areas of parts of our properties that were purchased in a developed state with the understanding that they would be allowed to be maintained, would rapidly become unviable and degraded if native vegetation regrowth was not allowed to be controlled.
- The only protection we have at present are our PMAVs which could be removed at any time. Whereas in the past we could manage our land in a manner dictated by common sense and first hand experience, it is now necessary to spend valuable time applying for permits and in many cases waiting excessive lengths of time to have these permits approved often by people who have little knowledge of the local area involved.
- In the past, clearing of leasehold land, Brigalow development blocks etc, was compulsory in order to retain the lease. Now landholders are being prevented from maintaining this development but still expected to derive an income from the land.

- The Eco-fund proposed by the Queensland Government to manage “green levies” and such lacks transparency and accountability, and should at least be administered by a non-government and industry related body.
- Whereas food production was once considered important, food producers are now treated as though they are destroying the land. ***Human beings need food to survive.***
- Consumers are unlikely to pay higher prices for domestic production and will instead buy cheaper imported products from countries with less friendly environmental practises.
- Freehold land is now subject to many of the same restrictions as leasehold land despite large sums of money being paid for freeholding rights.
- Contributions made by farmers to greenhouse gas reduction, environmental conservation and ecological sustainability are unfair and out of proportion to the contribution made by the rest of the community. Mining and urban developments appear to be given more favourable treatment.
- On figures worked out on other properties it would appear that our own properties are net sequesters of carbon probably in the order of 3,000 to 5,000 tonnes.
- Available data suggests that the major greenhouse gases are – water vapour (97%), carbon dioxide (2%) and methane and other (1%)
- The proposed GHG abatement laws are based on flawed science and the IPCC has been exposed as using and adopting flawed data, material and assumptions
- Any emissions trading scheme needs to be carefully thought through and be comprehensive, fair and transparent and have broad community support in order to be successful. An incentive scheme is far preferable to a tax based scheme.
- The indirect expropriation of rural land owners existing and lawful ‘rights’ is unfair and unjust and has resulted in financial benefit for the government and for the broader public.
- A far greater amount of money is needed in research and development funding than is currently made available by government – both with respect to climate research and in connection with rural land use practices.
- Minister Wallace (Qld) on 18 April 2007 in speaking in debate on the Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (page 1304) said that ***“The government on behalf of the people of Queensland manages the leasehold estate and the funds that are derived from it go back into consolidated revenue. It is incumbent upon the government to ensure that the community receives a fair return on this asset”***. With the restrictions placed on land holders and rents increasing every year it appears that farmers are excluded from receiving a fair return.