

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee

I am writing to you of my concerns on how the native vegetation laws and legislated greenhouse gas abatement measures will affect the landholders of Australia.

I do not work the land but have many friends who do and the hours they work each and every day to try to make a living is amazing. there is no doubt that these farming families are on the land because they truly care and want to provide food etc for the country.

These people are the true land owner and land holder and they need as much support and respect as given to any other worker. These new measures undermine the fact that they own the land freehold, with all the "fee simple" land rights.

These changes will impact greatly on the earning capacity of these farmers, with prices down and farmers unable to expand production due to the inability to develop their land, will only further limit their earnings. This will further add to the hardships such as flood, drought, market prices, that the landowner has to deal with on a day to day basis.

These restrictions and regulations will cause many problems to these families, leading to arguments, fights, health problems and not to mention suicide. No wonder the suicide rate is so high among the farming communities.. Long working hours,, regardless of the weather, or the time factor combined with the ever increasing paper work, courses etc that the government imposes onto the farmer with no regard to his or her commitments are a constant battle. The government changes the rules and each times takes more away from the farmer, whilst adding more restrictions.

To live solely off the land is difficult and many farmers need to find work off their farms to make ends meet only adding to their difficulties and yet these people continue to try to keep maintaining their dream or their promises to long gone family to keep working the land that they have inherited.

I personally feel the government should be trying to make it as simple as possible to keep the farmers on the land and to help them in being able to continue on the land, working hard to provide food, whether it be beef, grain, soy, vegetables and fruit for all Australians and the world to eat.

Farmers should be able to clear their land or on the reverse side of that be able to leave land to regenerate and renew for a few years, whilst continuing to work other paddocks efficiently without any threat of government fines or court action for clearing any land. Many paddocks need time to rest and regrow, by allowing this it saves the farmer money on fertiliser and keeps the land healthier. Farmers have to respect the land, it is their livelihood, their income, their life, and they should be given back their rights to work or clear their land as they need whether in time of fire threat or just to farm, the farmer should be able to do so when he / she deems necessary.

If the government is really serious about green house gases and reducing carbon pollution, then they should start with the big businesses, the ones making the pollution, regardless of how much money they donate to the government. Get these business's to clean up their act, stop them polluting our water and air.

The government should lead by example and reduce their overseas travelling and start using public transport or car pooling to get about. The amount of carbon pollution caused by just the Australian delegates attending Copenhagen last year was inexcusable. A far cheaper and cleaner and better way would be to use technology, via video conferencing.

I liken the way the government locks up land to that of asking a store say Myers to not use 1 floor of their store but still ask Myers to pay the same rent etc as before the closure. Consider how this would affect Myers and you get an idea of the impact the government is doing to the farmers / the land owners.

I am sure if the government made such restrictions to Myers it would be expected that compensation would be paid and so it should be paid to the land owners.

Governments on all levels need to learn to work with the farmers and assist the farmers to work and get the most out of their land. With government support our farmers can be the very best and continue to be the best in the world. I feel the government and the people of Australia owe the farmers a huge debt as they continue to feed us and the world with the cleanest produce in the world. The government should be very concerned at the impact this carbon pollution reduction scheme will have on our land owners and how it will affect Australia as a whole.

Thank you for allowing me to have a say.

Regards,
Jill Lyons