

4 March 2010

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Inquiry into Native Vegetation Laws, Greenhouse Gas Abatement and Climate Change Measures

I believe that there is a definite impact on rural landholders regarding a range of decisions made by government. :-

- There is a distinct case of inequality for landholders who have the misfortune of not having cleared all the vegetation on their properties for whatever reason (in most cases because they felt it was a responsible action) and now they find that they have to:- continue to pay high local government rates; continue to rid the area of feral animals and weeds and maintain the land in a responsible way, etc.; but not receive any form of compensation and not be able to use the land for any profitable purpose. This is a definite case of inequality and loss of property rights!
- The Coal Seam Gas industry seems to me to be given the green light to take massive amounts of water from the coal seams (I believe the figure of **2,000,000** megalitres over the next few years has been stated) with no regard for the possible effect on the upper aquifers - the Parsons Brinckerhoff Report commissioned by the Queensland State Government has stated that there **will** be an effect on the upper aquifers. I understand that Origin and Santos also believe that there will be an impact on the upper aquifers. The figure of 66,000 megalitres extraction per annum from the upper aquifers in the entire Condamine alluvium has been touted as being not sustainable and the total is being cut to 40,000 litres. This coal seam gas extraction will, I believe, lead to an enormous extra cost to irrigators and local governments. Should this be rubber-stamped as beneficial for all Australians – I think not!
- Should we not learn from previous environmental mistakes and not allow any further development to continue unless it can be proven (by independent investigation) that there will be absolutely no effect on our precious and very productive farming land. Let us not rush in and mess things up and then have to try to rectify monumental problems – some of which will never be able to be put right.
- I believe that Government should carefully look at **all** decisions to ensure that the “almighty dollar” is not placed on the top of the list of priorities. The impact on the environment and the social impact should always be highly considered.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present my submission.

Coralyn Brownhall