

TO THE SENATE INQUIRY.

The following is my submission to the senate inquiry on land clearing laws and others.

Firstly—the vegetation laws are far too restrictive on farmers land rights. Not only do they restrict his day to day workings of his property, they decrease his land asset value.

Please let me explain our dilemma as that is the one I know best. Firstly we had letters from The Lands Department urging us to freehold our leases at a low cost. We were skeptical for a while but decided we would try at a cost of \$398 per application. Eventually two people from the Lands Department came along. "Yes we will freehold the lease but we will put a covenant on it" Verbally the covenant was to leave the big trees, but when it came along in writing we couldn't do anything.

These are the parts of the covenant that bothered us:-

- 1—Native vegetation that has grown prior to 1/1/90 must not be cleared.
- 2—Tillage or application of herbicides must not be undertaken.
- 3—Non-native crops or exotic pastures species must not be established.
- 4—Standing or fallen dead timber must not be cleared or removed.
- 5—The removal of soil or inorganic material such as bush rocks is prohibited.
- 6—Logging of native vegetation is prohibited.

Now do you call that freehold. Needless to say we won't sign them until they are changed dramatically.

We had clearing and logging permits in place before but they won't recognise them. On contacting the C.M.A. they told me that much the same laws were now on my freehold titles and I can only clear regrowth that has come up since 1990. Since we have been in severe drought since then we have only cleared about 1000 acres. Most of our clearing was done in the seventies and eighties and the regrowth is growing back to it's original state. All that work for nothing!, and our carrying capacity has almost halved. We don't kill trees because we hate them, it costs a lot of money to clear land today. You have to clear the trees to grow grass for the cattle and to increase the value of assets.

It has been stated that the covenant does not significantly impact on the economic viability of the land. Any person making such a statement is in total ignorance of the grazing industry and property management. Trees have to be thinned to grow grass and if cattle are forced to stay in timbered areas they will become stunted. They need sunshine as well as high protein grasses for growth. If only a small area is cleared and the rest left, cattle will stay on the cleared parts till they graze it bare, once again impacting on the environment.

Farmers know more about the environment and conservation than the people making these childish laws.

THROW THEM OUT I say and replace them (the laws) with commonsense and let conservation areas be voluntary with an annual rental payable to the farmer or landholder.

If these clearing laws aren't changed (like letting our old clearing and logging permits come back into play), our property alone, will be reduced from 4000 acres to 1000 acres of productive land. In this low carrying capacity country we will become less than paupers.

SECONDLY:- Climate change is a fabrication by powerful people in high places. A panic tactic that will turn ordinary people to bite off the hand that feeds them, -- **THE FARMERS.**

Carbon credit:-- Now that, as I understand it, is the government tie farmers land up in order to get carbon credit from the trees they are not allowed to clear to form a carbon sink, and then to sell these

credits on to industry so they can make more emissions,with no compensations to farmers.
SHAME I say, pay the farmer for the carbon in installments at a fair price,thus enabling them to get some return on the land they can't use.

HOW DOES ALL THIS FIX OUR CLIMATE CHANGE.Are our politicians trying to play God?

I say don't panic people ,let nature take it's course,it has all happened before.

MINING:--our government is allowing coal mining on our choice farming lands,there is plenty of coal in less productive land further out.Mine these areas first.Western Australia can mine iron ore quite successfully and profitably in very, very remote areas.Pay the land owners half the royalties that governments take and they would quite happily let mining take place in these larger areas.

Barry Johnstone