

To the Senate Inquiry into Native Vegetation Laws, Greenhouse Gas Abatement and Climate Change Measures.

Firstly I want to point out that I only heard about this enquiry and the invitation for submissions at the last moment through a neighbour, and he had only heard about it several days before that from another neighbour. There does not seem to have been much publicity informing farmers of this opportunity to have their say.

Instead of working on their land to earn a living for themselves and their families, and to feed our nation, farmers are having to spend an *ever increasing* amount of time and income on unproductive government inspired paperwork and vigilantly defending themselves against the theft of that land from an *ever increasing* number of government instituted ‘departments’ which are imposing an *ever increasing* number of confusing laws and regulations, at least some of which contradict one another, making it impossible for a normal person to sort out what the law is anyway. (Yet lack of knowledge of, or understanding of those laws, is not accepted when someone unwittingly breaks one! But that’s another issue.)

Title to our land, which in many cases has been in the same families for a number of generations of farmers, is being eroded little by little and in *ever increasing* increments. Freehold title, meaning the rights to the land was sold to the buyer, is becoming meaningless – stolen back by government under various guises. At times throughout history landowners have had to defend themselves physically from strong-arm invaders who came using physical force to take their land – nowadays we are having to use all our emotional and mental energy defending ourselves. I’m an ordinary, quiet, peace-loving country woman and farmer’s wife, distressed by seeing my husband, my sons and my farming friends losing so much precious time in which they would normally be working their farms and earning an income (to live on, and to pay those *ever increasing* costs and charges imposed upon us by government departments for owning our land), spending it at *ever increasing* meetings, discussions, in researching legal paperwork and letter writing. “Tell us what you want”, we are told – but often after months or years of wasted talking and writing we find the new laws forced upon us anyway. Sometimes I can’t help but wonder how long before thoroughly disgruntled farmers will become so emotionally weary of the battle they will resort to more physical means of defence.

If I am to get this letter to your Inquiry, I do not have time to even begin to write with details about the theft of our rights to ownership of our land or the God-given (not government given) rain which falls on our farms, the theft of our right to effectively and efficiently farm our land by being able to sensibly decide on how and where to site dams, or even to build them in the first place; to remove old or dangerous trees; to change layout for efficiency, safety, economy, better production, the betterment of the environment and for the future of the land and our grandchildren; of the government funded officials (most of whom have only ever ‘farmed’ from behind a desk and computer) who tell us how, where and what we can farm, who feel they can come and go on our land whenever they wish, frequently treating experienced farmers who *know* the land like imbecile children, and who are at times causing some farmers to get around unwise laws by breaking them and actually do things which they would never normally do or in a way they would not otherwise do, in their efforts to survive and to properly farm their properties.

The facts and the figures are all available for your Inquiry, from experienced farmers who understand their land if you are genuinely interested in finding the truth of what is happening. I hope and pray the Inquiry will give the necessary time and effort to publicising the fact that you are seeking that truth, and in righting the wrongs which are being done to the people called farmers - the working backbone of Australia – under these Native Vegetation laws and because of these *naturally occurring* times of climate change.