

SUBMISSION FOR - INQUIRY INTO THE IMPACT ON THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR OF VEGETATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT POLICIES, REGULATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS.

THANK YOU FOR DOING THIS INQUIRY – WE HAVE WAITED NINETEEN YEARS FOR THIS TO HAPPEN.

Past and current practices of land and vegetation management by the agricultural sector and regional industries:

Approximately twenty five years ago I had a fire on my farm. It was early in the morning and there was no heat at the time. I contacted two close neighbours and asked them for help. They arrived quickly, with two tractors and a water tank, we pushed a fire break and we managed to control the fire before it got out of control. This is something I couldn't do today because at the moment nobody seems to know how wide I can legally clear a fire break. The size of a fire break in a case like this, can only be determined by the person who is there and has knowledge of the country and conditions, not someone sitting in an air-conditioned office in Brisbane. We have seen large fines being handed out by the Labor Government to people who do fire-breaks on their own land as they have been told that they are too wide.

If a bushfire was burning now on my farm in the green zone, I would not risk my life or expect anyone else to, to put the fire out because those trees have no value to me now and this sort of fire is extra dangerous because it can burn from top of tree to top of tree. The Queensland Labor Government has taken the value away. I would let the fire burn until it reached the farm land which I would want to protect. I have spoken to other landholders and they feel the same. It would be a different matter if the Government was paying for the use of my trees and my land that they are taking the use of.

The economic impact of vegetation and land management policies, regulations and restrictions:

Years ago, I purchased an additional 20 acres of land next to the block I already owned from my neighbour. A portion of this new block was higher and as I irrigate by trickle irrigation I set about getting water to the highest point of this block which meant digging an underground pipeline for about 700 metres and setting up a tank on the highest point. This work was paid for and all completed before the Vegetation Management Act came in. The Act then came into place and as I only had a very small portion of the land cleared, I was not able to proceed with planting because it just was not viable on such a small area so the tank and the pipeline was useless and it was not worth trying to retrieve. The pipeline would have cost more to dig it back up and most probably would have damaged it in doing so and the tank still sits there

because it was only purchased for that particular job.

This is freehold land therefore the Government received payment for the trees originally. We have purchased this land, so we now own it and the trees. The Government has taken the use of these trees and because we cannot clear the trees, that means they have also now taken the use of the land. We cannot use this land ourselves but still have to pay rates. The landholder is punished even though it is his land and his trees and the Government pays absolutely nothing to use it. Basically the Queensland Labor Government has taken part of our assets and turned it into a liability for us. This is wrong. The Premier of Queensland complains about Clive Palmer's treatment of his workers but she has no qualms in "ripping-off" landowners.

I believe the Act has devalued my land and this was to be my superannuation for the future.

Grahame Hirning

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