

CONFIDENTIAL AS TO NAME OF SUBMITTER PLEASE.

**Submission to Australian Government Senate Enquiry into
Native Vegetation Laws, Greenhouse Gas Abatement and Climate Change Measures.**

I wish to state, and have considered, my viewpoints on these proposed laws.

1. It is a fact that this country was built on sound principles of private property rights, which included, from the wording on title deeds, that freehold property was “for the use and enjoyment of the titleholder, to the exclusion of all others”. To alter this is a betrayal of the social contract this nation was built on.

It is acknowledged that mineral rights always reside with the Crown, and it is fair that water be regarded as mineral. However, if any government, whether under populist pressures or not, wishes to interfere with the rights of landholders to manage vegetation (native or otherwise), then obviously the government must either buy the freehold or mind their own business. Of course regulations requiring that there be no harm or disadvantage caused to others must be applied.

I have a property which has 60 acres of creek-side land which was cleared of brambles and trees with no useful application, for the purpose of cattle grazing 100 years ago, while retaining useful species (such as oak for cattle-yard rails and sandalwood for fence posts, and other vegetation useful for controlling any erosion which might have taken place. Since then under my ownership, there has been re-growth because I have been forced to live absent from the property which is now used for grain share-farming, with the creek paddocks not presently utilised.

When and if I am able to retire shortly and take up full residence, I should be able to reserve the right to clear regrowth of opportunistic and pest species and restore the creek-side areas to cattle production, or run show horses without the interference of “green” nut-case characters who have, in reality, no concept of rural land husbandry. This has to be a balance between conservation of nuisance or pest species like kangaroos and dingos, and beneficial productivity. At present control of Prickly Pear and Tiger Pear has become a major concern and expense, (spread by birds and kangaroos respectively)

Certainly it is completely unjust for rights to be eroded, while the landholder has to continue (for economic survival and for environment sustainability) to be responsible for control of pests, - animal and vegetable - pay rates, be deprived of profit potential or compensation, while probably receiving no carbon credits when and if instituted.

2. With regard to “climate change”, it is certainly a concern because I have seen figures from scientists which show that sea level rise (from snow and glacier melt) has run at a measured rate of 1mm per year for the last decade. At this rate, sea level may rise a metre within a thousand years, and we should act now to try to stop this before the rate of rise increases. Other effects may also be change to weather patterns and we need to ensure our river systems are well managed.

I have been a flood harvest licensee in the past, and the terms were that I could only pump after flow was at a specified rate. There has been much talk to the effect that water rights have been over-allocated, and the Murray System has run dry. The real truth is that the system is over-used because no government has had the guts to actually administer their own regulations. In my

district (near Warra, Queensland) I wrote to the DPI to point out that no farmer in the district had ever seen any inspector, the flows after rain had never been monitored at all and no farmers off-take had ever been measured against the creek flows.

Their response was to immediately inspect my farm, so that I could no longer say what I had said (although I haven't been a licensee for 20 years). Otherwise however nothing has changed, and no neighbour licensee has still ever had a measurement or check done.

Obviously, under a flood harvesting regime as it was when I had a licence, the rivers would always flow, as long as the rules were followed. Failure of the regime is entirely due to the slovenly approach of government agencies, and draconian measures are entirely out of proportion.

I would even suggest that if CSG explorers and extractors treat their groundwater uptake in the manner practiced by Origin in Queensland at the moment, it will be beneficial to all parties. I.e. full desalination, and commercial utilization of all fractions extracted.