

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Native Vegetative Laws – Senate Inquiry

It is very clear to me as a Landowner that the Government is actively eroding our Rights to work our land. I am the fourth generation of farmer on our land, I have sons and grandsons who also are on the land.

The current economic climate has placed more emphasis on farming to be more productive and more efficient, which is difficult enough, however, with the ever changing and more stringent controls Government is placing on us our family will not survive on the land.

As a family we have strong cultural, historic and spiritual ties with our land, we don't just farm it - we know it, we respect and we love it. It is in our blood. The current Native Vegetation Laws do not understand this. They have a very narrow view. Native Vegetation Laws seem to be administered in isolation to other environmental concerns – for example water, hazard reduction, farm safety, animal welfare and health and most importantly productivity.

As farmers we understand the need for a holistic approach to the land and the environment - as responsible Land Managers we know how they all hinge on each other and we work towards economic and environmental sustainability.

The current Native Vegetation Laws have undermined the stability of our farming families and put our economic future in jeopardy.

Productive rural land had been growing up with regrowth and weeds because many Landowners are afraid to continue to manager their land as they need to – they have stopped clearing regrowth, spraying weeds, reducing fire hazards– now I see around me productive land that is diminishing in value because of Government laws.

When these Landowners die their land will be sold – for not anywhere near its potential value, because no other farmer will buy it because of all the red tape involved in trying to get the Dept of Environment and Climate Change to grant permission to restore to its productive working life again.

If a son should inherit that land than he will be faced with the same red tape and a huge financial burden to make the land viable again and the emotional trauma of not being able to keep the family farm.

The economic implication of this on families and rural communities is difficult to measure because it will effect generations. Australia is fast loosing its

capacity to produce reasonably priced food because of diminishing viable farm land and more and more farmers leaving the land.

The diversification of environments within our country makes it very difficult for a new farmer to come into an area and be successful - it is the local knowledge of that specific parcel of land and its history that is imperative to the successful management of it. No Government official with the Dept of Environment and Climate Change will have that same knowledge, regardless of how many degrees he/she holds.

Unless the Government restores to Landowners the RIGHT TO WORK HIS LAND then we are going to see Government having to rightfully compensate us for our land and our loss of income and for the loss of our families heritage. Government will also need to look at subsidising farmers to stay on the land and the public will see much higher food prices and more and more imports.