

The Secretary
Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage
Canberra

Dear sir/madam,

My family live in the Nyngan district and have for over 100 years, during that time we have altered our farming and grazing systems according to market signals which is probably why we are still here. Over the last 30 years as wool production in this area has become unprofitable we have increased our cropping programme to maintain our profitability. This has involved removing areas of native pastures. The Conservation Controls imposed by the NSW government in recent years effectively prevents farmers from making commercial decisions and staying in business. The vast majority of this shire is uncleared, less than 15% of the total area is cropped, most of the people who own uncleared grazing properties have been losing money every year for at least 10 years. Recently the losses have increased and many people are on the threshold of insolvency. The social consequences are enormous. Yet they are prevented from clearing land and pursuing normal market signals.

I have contacted many of the most successful local sheep graziers in this district and they have said they have **gross returns** of \$3/acre(\$7/hectare) per annum after costs this becomes a loss. Compare this, if you will, to a similar survey of wheat farmers, verified by our own figures, of wheat paddocks' five years averages of **net returns** of \$51/acre(\$126/hectare) per annum.

The current restrictions force individual farmers to bear the entire cost of conservation in New South Wales: in this district for every acre they are prevented from clearing it costs them \$48/year.

If the community as a whole values native vegetation then the community must bear the cost: For a mere \$48/acre the community may preserve as much native vegetation as it wishes.

This is an urgent issue as many people have very little time left. There are a large percentage of people in this district who do not wish to clear their country but are being forced to do so by market pressures, they would gladly welcome any opportunity to continue their current low-pressure grazing systems. Please address the urgent issue of compensation (land stewardship payments, native vegetation maintenance payments) for clearance restrictions.

**OR IF THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT PREPARED TO PAY FOR NATIVE
VEGETATION THEN OVERRIDE THE RESTRICTIONS ON LAND CLEARING
IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

yours,

Richard Bootle