

Inquiry into the Impact of Conservation Controls imposed on Landholders Submission

The impact of conservation controls on landholders (Farmers & Graziers) could only be described as overwhelming, financially debilitating and in the last half dozen or so years, the complete reverse of what landholders have been encouraged, and, in some cases, required to carry out by Governments and the community as a whole, for the previous 100 years or so.

From a landholders point of view, particularly in our Region, the attitude reversal has not been sufficiently backed up by sound, scientific fact at a local level and does not recognise the environmental, social and financial benefits of sensible development on an ongoing basis as opposed to overclearing.

The areas of land on our particular property that have not been developed, either have or are rapidly developing thick regrowth of Wilga (*Geijera Parviflora*), Cypress Pine (*Callitris Columellaris*), Bimble Box (*Eucalyptus Populnea*) and Emu Bush (*Eremopuila Longifolia*), a lot of which is thick enough to stop motorbikes passing through it, thereby restricting such management activities as livestock mustering and noxious plant and animal inspection and control. The regrowth all but eliminates desirable understorey of any description.

The areas of Land on our place that have been developed now have large open areas of native grass and herbage interspersed by clumps and corridors of timber. You can be quite sure that the majority of native birds and animals populate the developed areas where their feed is plentiful whilst still having timbered areas to shelter in.

The denser undeveloped areas on the other hand, provide a haven for feral carnivorous animals and feral goats, whilst making location and control of noxious plant species extremely difficult.

As stated above, for the vast majority of the twentieth century, landholders have been encouraged/required to carry out property development at their own expense with some tax incentives to induce such activities, to then be told that all that went before was wrong and landholders must now wear the cost of the reverse activity or inactivity as the case may be, is quite absurd.

Developed land in our area has an earning capacity of approximately 100 -1000% greater than undeveloped scrubby areas. Considering landholders purchased their land with the option to increase its productive capacity, the cost of such land and its productive capabilities must surely be borne by those who wish for such change. Government revenue raised by a taxation burden on the whole community used to buy back land for the purpose of locking it up or conserving it, must surely be the only equitable way of paying for such conservation measures.

In my personal experience, conservation groups such as the Australian Conservation Foundation and National Parks and Wildlife Service, etc, do not know specifically what they want, but simply lobby and push to lock up as much agricultural land as they can without having sound scientific foundation, at a local level for doing so, and without regard for the financial and social predicaments of those who have bought the land and now preside over its well being.

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