

INQUIRY INTO THE IMPACT OF CONSERVATION CONTROLS IMPOSED ON LANDHOLDERS SUBMISSION

In rural areas agriculture provides the bulk of employment and employment opportunities. Governments are restricting my farm business and adding to my operating costs, making it impossible to hire or stay viable.

The State Government has legislated environmental policies that are suppose to reflect the desires of six million people in NSW, but the cost is being carried by a small number of farmers, approximately 40,000.

The State has taken away many of my assets and opportunities without paying for them. I have a 6000- hectare property, which has 28 km of river frontage. What I once considered an asset is now a liability. I cannot develop 500 m's on either side of the river, nor can I develop any of the flood plains because they might be potential-habitat for three species of birds listed as threatened and one skink listed as threatened. There is no doubt in my mind, my right to earn a living has been taken away. On my application, under financial benefits the economic return to the community was not considered high enough. IE: If I could employ five or more people, instead of one, would have been beneficial. No, consideration was given to me and my family. It was a case of bad luck - move somewhere else! I estimate my losses at a minimum of \$100,000.00 per year. All of the above is for the public-good conservation.

The state has locked me into a sheep enterprise which is becoming less profitable, in order to meet public policy outcomes that are of no benefit to me! The urban population that supports these policies have no idea of the impact on farmers - nor do they care! It doesn't impact on them. They can sit in their lounge rooms sipping wine, and tell each other what a wonderful cause they are supporting and how they are saving the bush from the red necks who live there. Occasionally they venture over the Blue Mountains and use my back yard as their personal playground, then head back to suburbia leaving their rubbish and effluent. Ignorance is bliss because they don't contribute a single dollar to the cost of public-good conservation. Nor do they understand locking up country without managing it is a bigger environmental problem.

Many farmers, like myself, are being forced to run more stock and put more pressure on our land, just to stay afloat. It's not something we want to do, but are being forced into by current legislation. Charles Sturt University scientists did a study on the value of native vegetation conservation to farmers. They concluded that the costs clearly outweighed any benefits and that conservation requires significant financial incentives. Melbourne University has released two reports and reached exactly the same conclusion. The Industry Commission report released said the same thing. Farmers will have to be paid for the extra costs, and the lost opportunities. In my mind, conservation by confiscation is nothing short of theft! .

Custodial taxation is a major factor in the demise of our rural heritage, premature reallocation of primary production resources and destruction of traditional rural social fabric. Its iniquitous administration places almost the entire physical and financial burden on the .6% of the NSW population with less than .1% of that population incurring more than 80% of

the total cost. Custodial taxation is regressive, inconsistently applied and directly affects societies lowest personal income earners. - Micheal Brennan, Ecological Economist.

On my property (3rd generation) conservation is second nature. I know my property and can decide what areas need protection and what areas would benefit from development. The State and Commonwealth can tout the benefits of conservation and do the top-down approach to enforce their beliefs, but in the end farmers are part of the equation and you have to take us into consideration!

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