

**ANNEXURE A – INQUIRY INTO THE IMPACT
CONTROLS IMPOSED ON LANDHOLDERS**

FIVEWAYS LANDCARE GROUP
HOMEVILLE
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2825

April 6, 2000

Dear Sir

We as a landcare group are concerned with the direction the DLWC are taking in regard to native vegetation retention in our region. At the present time the DLWC are recommending the locking up of large areas which have no resemblance to the condition of the native vegetation in our region prior to white settlement.

The areas being locked up are either

- (a) Large areas of dense cypress pine under which nothing else grows, especially absent are any stands of native grasses; and
- (b) Large blocks of bumble box which have a dense understory of woody weeds. Once again these areas do not allow any establishment of native grasses which are crucial for the prevention of water erosion in our red sandy and red gravelly loams. There is abundant evidence of water erosion in these stands of box, which are void of grass cover.

Neither of these stands resemble the vegetation mix in this area prior to white settlement as the large hot wildfires which were lit by Aborigines and electrical storms would burn unchecked across the landscape, culling 95% of the young cypress regrowth and about 80% of the young box regrowth. These fires would also burn down the oldest hollow box and control the weedy weeds, as has been proved in the western division.

This district receives an average rainfall of 350-375mm pa. The conservationists and government must realise this rainfall cannot support dense woodlands as seen in the higher rainfall, mountainous areas which they are familiar with. The native grasses just simply cannot compete with this dense woodland growth and die out leaving no groundcover, which is crucial for erosion control in these red soils. Another problem experienced in the dense growth of cypress is the mono environment they create. Because they do not let anything else grow between them, they create a single species environment, effectively excluding 90% of the native animals which exist in true representative native habitats.

Unless there is a change in the direction of conservation, large areas in this district will become environmental disasters which the next generation will be left to correct. People must realise we cannot just keep a big green dot on a map because it looks good. These green dots *MUST* be analyzed to make sure they are representative of the vegetation which was in the area prior to white settlement. If we do not adopt this analytical approach we are going to end up with a landscape and wildlife mix which bears no resemblance to the original Australian bushland.

Yours sincerely
Gabrielle Holmes,
Chairman.