

SUBMISSION ON MIS SCHEMES



We farm in the Herbert Valley, Abergowrie, Ingham district and have done so for many years as our ancestors did previously. We have been observing two neighbours of ours Great Southern on one side and Rewards group on the other.

Firstly, it was said that they would only be purchasing poor agricultural land for developing tree plantations. I quote from another source – magazine Canopy, Volume 5, 2009. “FEA ‘s long standing record of selecting quality rural land and managing it well has been an integral factor in our growth.” So it can be said that the MIS schemes capitalized on farmers being forced to exist on a corrupt world market receiving low prices for their sugar and other commodities while having to purchase equipment, fertilizer etc. at first world prices.

In our area farmers had to buy a licence paying (\$45.00 per tonne to grow cane). To grow a 1,000 tone farmers paid \$45,000 for the privilege(some people paid more) to supply the CSR sugar mill. When farmers were faced with deregulation the only value of their property was the land as their licences lost all value. There was no compensation whatsoever for the loss of these licences, forcing farmers into a corner where they couldn’t survive on the earnings generated by their product. Ill health arising from stress became a factor, so that their only alternative was to sell out to these schemes at the lowest price because no other farmer could afford to buy the farms from them.

We were assured that when the MIS schemes started we would see money spent in the town, employment etc. There was no money spent in the town, back packers were bought in by bus from Mission Beach, they worked for the day and then were taken back to Mission Beach. The only employment was a couple of local fellows to do the slashing o a temporary basis and a person to do the laser leveling. All the fertilizer was bought in by semi trailer, the chemicals for spraying were bought by the pallet from outside the district. The poor old farmer could only afford a drum or two of chemical, not a pallet load.

Great Southern used Casterton Plantations, Victoria for all the contracting work and their equipment, tractors, spray rigs, rippers etc. were bought all the way from Victoria to work in Ingham and other places. As Great Southern is now in receivership some of the gear has been put up for sale on the side of the road with the rest being shipped back to Victoria. The remaining workers who relocated to Mission Beach are in limbo not knowing whether they have a job to keep them gainfully employed and the local people were told to find other work.

It is of concern to us that now the plantations are becoming overgrown with weeds and vines. One weed in particular declared by DPI as noxious is Hymenacne. Hymenacne came onto the land with the major flood from Cyclone Ellie. As it becomes more and more overgrown we will have more feral pig populations to combat and will be left to find the extra chemicals etc. to keep our productive farming enterprise the way it should be kept.

Teak trees lose all of their foliage in winter and as these mount up they will become a fire hazard. It only takes one lightening strike to start a fire.

We have also been a recipient of a Corporation riding roughshod over a family farmer as have others in the district. These MIS people come into a district they know nothing about the area or it's history, nor do they bother to find out and then cause problems as per the attachments included with this submission. These attachments are self explanatory.

MIS Schemes particularly planting trees were doomed to failure from the start. As farmers know you cannot keep putting out money for wages, chemicals, fertilizers, rates etc. year in and year out for fifteen to twenty years without some sort of return unless you have an unending supply of money.

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