

Hazeldean  
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15th. July, 2003

IN REFERENCE TO THE ISSUES PAPER ON THE IMPACTS OF NATIVE  
VEGETATION AND BIODIVERSITY REGULATIONS.

On behalf of the Miriam Vale Rural Science and Landcare Society, I wish to present a submission to this inquiry. The above group has been fully operational for thirty-three years and while the membership consists mainly of landholders other members of the community are involved and their input welcomed.

There has been increasing concern over the ever increasing regulations restricting the development and management of members businesses, namely their properties. Farmers are getting mixed messages from Government Agencies and there is little consistency regarding whether permits are required or not, resulting in a lack of confidence in the agencies.

Costs and delays in obtaining permits is also a problem and in some cases regrowth is classified as remnant or endangered in the interim. In answer to the question of why the land was not cleared before, in many cases it has been cleared but because coastal country regenerates quickly and regrowth is usually controlled on a rotational basis of seven to ten year cycles, unforeseen circumstances such as droughts, downturns in commodity prices, family deaths or breakups etc. can often prevent the plan from being carried out.

Grazing beef properties are the most affected in this region and sugarcane and horticultural farms are least affected unless they need to expand and establish new areas where remnant vegetation is present. The legislation will affect 95 to 100% of beef properties in this region Operating costs on timbered country increase ie. mustering supplementary feeding (25 to 33%) higher and larger areas are required to be viable necessitating more fencing, watering points and local Government rates.

Land values have been affected with the value of cleared grazing land increasing by up to 401/0 while the value of timbered country has decreased by approximately 33% or more The economic and social impact assessment on this region (Wide Bay/ Burnett) by the D.P.I. report on the impact of the Vegetation Management Act 1999 has been ignored by the State Government Likewise, the Regional Committee's Draft report ( Wide Bay/ Burnett) is biased towards the Conservation role and the economic impact on landholders has been largely ignored.

There appears to be a concept that all landholders. are financially affluent and therefore can bear the cost of providing these so called benefits to the community from their resources. If the majority of the community want these benefits, then they should bear a fair proportion of the cost possibly by the imposition of a G.S.T. type of taxation system

Yours faithfully,

Colleen Stehbens.