

Productivity Commission
LB2 Collins Street
East Melbourne
Victoria 8003

Federal Government Public Inquiry Into the Impacts of Native Vegetation and Biodiversity Regulations.

We own a property near Kyogle on the far North Coast on which we run beef cattle. The Native Vegetation and Biodiversity regulations impact, not only on my ability as a farmer to be viable, but, on our whole community in general.

What affects my routine farming will eventually have an affect on the entire community, our towns, schools, villages and hospitals.

Bringing in rules and regulations that dictate what I can and can't do on my own property will restrict the amount of land that is open to me to farm. This will affect not only me financially, but have a wider impact with ongoing economical problems, especially in smaller communities.

Issues that concern me are:

restrictions on clearing regrowth on steep land

buffers around riparian areas

limited number of trees to be logged for on farm use

threat of not being allowed to clear regrowth over 10 years.

A big part of my property, is steep land, which has been maintained sustainably by mechanical and chemical means. We don't have an erosion problem due to the soil types and make up of the land. 18 degrees is still considered farmable land around here and should not be on the protected list. We retain a large portion of trees on these areas.

Buffers along riparian zones may work in some areas and be beneficial, but, we have a problem with oaks and other trees growing in the creek in drier times and causing erosion when they fall or are washed over in the floods. The large roots take out big chunks of the bank and also divert the water from the main flow back in to the bank itself and cause more erosion.

The restrictions on how, where and what we can log are too limiting. We need to be able to assess and make the decision ourselves (within reason). After all if it wasn't for conservative farming practices in the past, then the timber would not be available today. Timber is needed on farm for fence posts, yards and repairs, and limiting the supply will make it very hard for maintenance purposes. In hard times the sale of logs is often the

only thing that keeps us afloat, we should not lose any of our property rights including our timber rights.

The under ten year regrowth is a real problem. We need flexibility. It is not always practical to remove the regrowth every 10 years, often, it is better environmentally to leave it for longer periods and remove when time, money and weather permit.

Many of the forests in our area have been handed over to the National Parks. With the limited resources they are given, there has been very little to no hazard reduction in the National Parks, this puts surrounding farms and communities at risk from both fire and weed infestations. By selectively logging the forests and the National Parks this will relieve the pressure on the small pockets of timber that is now available and in the long term will be healthier for the environment.

The RFA was put in place for the protection of the future of the timber industry, but the government reneged on the agreement and again changed the goal posts. There is no security in the industry and no guarantees of timber supplies to small mills; this is affecting our local communities as they depend on this industry.

I would like the freedom to run my property sustainably and viably without the stand over tactics that the government uses. They have no vested interest and very little understanding of what it takes to run my property.

Yours sincerely

Jim and Evelyn O'Neill
Via Kyogle 2474