

Submission in response to Draft Report of Productivity Commission Inquiry into *Impacts of Native Vegetation & Biodiversity Regulations.*

Submission by: Charles Reynolds, NSW

Abraham Lincoln described democracy as “government of the people, by the people, for the people” what we have here is “government of the bureaucrats, by the bureaucrats, for the bureaucrats”. The issue of vegetation conservation is being used as a weapon by those who want to increase control over others.

There is also the issue of one interest group, the “environmentalists” negatively impacting on the ability of another [the farming community] to make a living. The policies proposed by this interest group often have the reverse result to that they are supposedly meant to be gaining.

In actuality, the environment is not being cared for: government agencies set up their “kingdoms” in such a way that they are vulnerable to destruction eg lack of access in times of fire as fire trails have been intentionally blocked; the lack of control of feral animals and noxious weeds in these areas not only impact on the adjoining farmers but also on these areas of so called conservation. And the whole exercise seems to be so reliant on “fuzzy” science.

With respect to the draft paper put out by the Commission I specifically draw attention to ‘Draft Recommendation 9.8’. Unfortunately this recommendation gets close to but stops short of the crux of the problem. It has been wrapped up in soft language and reads as something that is desperately attempting to upset no one. This is not possible due to the degree of emotion on both sides of the issue. To propose that “conservation...should be ‘bought’.. where intervention is deemed necessary” is fine, however, in New South Wales the lack of trust between the parties deems such an approach more difficult than would at first appear to be the case. I could not find any reference to the lack of trust and credibility in the Draft. This is an important factor in this State.

The lack of trust on the side of the landholder comes from the conviction that what was done to them with and since SEPP 46 was an act of theft. Unless this issue is addressed honestly and openly by government [politicians and bureaucrats] I can see no solution working. People who have had rights stolen are not going to agree to give anything more away on a promise from those who have already robbed them.

Who is going to decide whether “intervention” is “deemed necessary”? The same people who are continually introducing impractical legislation as a result of lack of consultation with the very people that legislation is designed to impact on the most? With a gun to your head, how voluntary is voluntary?

I would welcome the opportunity to expound on these thoughts with the Commissioners in Dubbo.

For one, we have lost sight of the conviction of our forefathers that legitimate government should also be limited government. The English writer and thinker Lord Acton attributed this belief to the influence of the founder of Christianity, who in reply to a trick question advised his listeners to render unto Caesar that which was Caesar's and to God that which was God's. Thus was established in mankind's thinking the idea that limits should be set to the size and nature of government's claims on the lives of ordinary citizens. Furthermore, the individual should not willingly surrender to the state that which is not rightly the state's. **The Hon John Anderson MP, Member for Gwydir (NSW) First Speech To Parliament - 17/8/1989**