

Mr Bill Burnheim,  
Committee Member,  
Regional Development Australia – Orana,  
[bill.burnheim@rdaorana.com.au](mailto:bill.burnheim@rdaorana.com.au),  
M. 0429 138 644,  
16 July 2012

Native Vegetation Regulation Review  
Conservation Policy and Strategy Section  
Office of Environment and Heritage  
Level 12, PO Box A290  
Sydney South NSW 1232,

To whom it may concern,

Re: Draft Native Vegetation Regulation 2012

Regional Development Australia (RDA) - Orana is part of a national initiative based on building partnerships and ensuring that all governments and stakeholders are responsive to local priorities and needs. It is a conduit between government and local communities, and a provider of information.

I attended the Walgett information meeting this date in regard to the draft regulation and information on draft codes of practice.

Around 90 farmers from the local region attended and listened to the presentation from the Namoi C.M.A.

The general feeling of the meeting was that the proposed changes to the regulations are merely lip service to the consultation process, where there will be little real changes on the ground. The meeting was polite during the presentation phase but vocal in opposition to the Act, Regulation and Codes of Practice.

The unfairness of the Act which brings the whole burden onto the farming industry while others (mining and developers) as well as Government agencies are not subject to the same rules and constraints in regard to Native Vegetation is viewed with palpable hatred.

The economic costs and the social cost to this region are large. The inability of farmers to develop their farms causes limited economic opportunities for them and related industries. This has caused a flow on effect to whole communities. Lack of jobs, unemployment, crime and social dislocation are only some of the problems. A drift to larger centers and Sydney adds to congestion and social problems there as well.

The meeting viewed the intrusion of Government into their businesses as unnecessary as the NSW Government has the ability to protect Native Vegetation by using Crown Lands, National Parks and Forests, as well as Riparian areas, wetlands and sacred sites.

The farmers of this region do not trust the process or those that implement it. The Act is seen as a political expediency of the previous Labor Government to shore up Green preferences by imposing unnecessary restrictions and regulations on a Coalition Constituency.

The advisers to this Government are also seen as the same bureaucrats who advised the previous Government so they would be unwilling to "break their rice bowl".

A repeal of the Act or exclusion of the Act outside the farmgate is seen as the only way forward. There is the opportunity for significant sustainable development for the regions, economic development which will lead to employment opportunities, food security as well as serious Government savings in not having to implement, regulate and prosecute this unworkable Act.

I believe this to be a true reflection of the meeting and would encourage strongly the amendment of the Act to exclude farmers so that they can carry out the difficult task of feeding this State and providing valuable export dollars to our nation. Market forces will dictate sustainable development of farms, as they have no protection from world markets and receive no protection in the way of subsidies or tariffs. Development is expensive so by default has to be sustainable.

This is an inexpensive way to improve the economic development of the State by \$100m's, to improve the social fabric of the regions, stop the drift of population, protect the environment and save costs on implementation. I remain

Yours faithfully,

Bill Burnheim.