

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, 12 August 2012 2:06 PM  
**To:** EHPP Landscapes & Ecosystems Section Mailbox  
**Subject:** native vegetation regulation review

Dear Committee

I would like to make the following submission on the native vegetation regulations and act as it has had a devastating impact on our farm and our lives. We purchased the 1600ha holding in 1982 of which only approximately 650 ha was being used for grazing, the balance although previously rung out was fenced out. We began a slow and sustainable program of selective clearing on a paddock by paddock method which included all new fencing, water and pasture improvements we paid particular attention to the retention of existing vegetation along water flows, retention for shade and wind protection and corridors to link paddocks together. We also at this time planted wind breaks on the originally cleared country and fixed minor paddock erosion with contour banks without accepting any government grants. We ceased our development program with the advent of the Native Vegetation act with the work not completed due to our thoughtful and careful approach to clearing, unlike some neighbors with dozer and chains who are now not effected by the regulation and have the financial benefit of cleared country. In 2004 we bought an adjoining block so one of our sons and his family could return to the land and help us. The new block is at a much lower elevation and has a considerable amount of 'coolatai grass' which is not present on our plateau or our neighbor's. The 2 blocks are separated by part of our undeveloped vegetation country.

A PVP was requested to clear with in an area of 68 ha, approximately 20 ha to clear with retention in that clearing, thus allowing a mosaic of vegetation to remain. The impact of this clearing would change the % of our cleared country by a factor of 1 from 58% to 59%. Because we obviously move stock between the 2 farms we needed a 'rest area' for overnight as it is a very steep climb from one farm to the other. We also needed to spell the stock so that any coolatai seed (a very invasive and introduced plant) in their dung would be left in a small area for eradication after germination therefore preventing the spread to our plateau and we also identified a need for a suitable water dam which could be used by National Parks and Wildlife and their helicopters for bush firefighting as 2 recent fires has seen water carted by tanker to replenish the existing small dams in the area. The clearing was not to increase the stocking rate of either farm but had significant benefits to animal health and welfare and environmental benefits to us and our area and the State, and would all be done at our expense.

Some 6 years later after repeated phone calls, visits to CMA, site inspections and us preparing full geographic maps etc. we received a determination. The Offsets were nothing short of theft and an insult to our proposal, the CMA wanting about 690 ha in perpetuity on the deeds, fenced out, and with all the other exclusions.

Farming and nature are not exact sciences and I believe determinations for clearing must be made taking into account all of the farms present and past history, credit must be given for proven sustainable past actions and practices. The economic ramifications for us has been severe with a large part of our farm not able to produce any income, and under this act, vegetation is a liability where we pay the full council rates, manage for weeds, feral pigs and goats (now a natural breeding area for them where they sleep by day and come out at night to eat the pastures) and as the vegetation grows denser year by year the fire danger becomes more of a threat. Recent property valuation in our area show cleared open grazing to be worth about \$2000 ha, timber grazing at \$200ha and as the scrub gets thicker so the grazing value diminishes which is where I am at now with no stock on those areas. We must have compensation where we are disadvantaged.

The social ramifications have been the worst burden to carry. My wife has been completely shattered by this vegetation act. Her dreams and expectations of creating a farm which would have been the model of sustainability and a marriage of grazing and vegetation has not eventuated, we are left with what she sees as foreboding blocks of stolen vegetated land, her life's work uncompleted and not much to look forward to, depressed and carrying the burden of hate for bureaucracy which has destroyed her passion for the country she was born in. It should be noted that the CMA's determination once served on the landholder is then concluded by that individual, for us we live with that determination and suffer it's penalty like a life sentence as the vegetation grows in our face and there is nothing we can do about it. I submit that clearing be considered on farms where old regrowth exceeds 30%, no regrowth date be set. If application still disallowed then compensation or stewardship payment be made to reflect a fair reward for earning capacity foregone. Offsets to be replaced by a 'fee to clear' as it is with other development applications. I would also like it noted the huge disparity between what the mining industry can do compared to the farmer. RAMA's for fence lines be set to tree height and provision given to stack timber away from live trees. More sensible provisions for clearing around dam sites and farm tracks etc (the 10 meter fence line is a joke, too narrow to walk stock along) We need to see these elementary decisions left for us to decide remember it is not an exact science, what is adequate for me may be not so on another farm. I strongly urge you to get out and visit the problems on farm as I do not think those making the decisions understand the dilemma we are in and put the POLITICS ASIDE.

Yours sincerely  
Roger Bomford

  
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