

# **Submission to Inquiry into Native Vegetation Laws, Greenhouse Gas Abatement and Climate Change Measures**

To: Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee

From: Ian Cox

## **Background**

I am a farmer on \_\_\_\_\_ of the Darling Downs of Queensland. I have been a farmer all my life but am also qualified as a carpenter. I have experience in manufacturing and have two sons who both farm. One son is a qualified, practising fitter and turner and both are fifth generation farmers.

My wife and I are graingrowers on some of the most inherently fertile and productive ground in Australia, and indeed the world.

As a farmer I am gravely concerned about the erosion of my rights as a landholder.

## **Submission**

As a result of the Native Vegetation Laws my property now has several isolated blocks of timber surrounded by cultivation. For the privilege of having these patches of anything but rare examples of the native vegetation I pay very dearly.

I am expected to pay rates, to control noxious weeds and pests on and for something which incidentally, is freehold land and is absolutely useless to me. The trees are so thick that little grows beneath them. Only the weeds multiply around the perimeters which are then hard to control and the prickly pear is free to do as it pleases.

The trees are very intrusive on the ground I try to farm as the root uptake competes with the crops and unless we have an extremely wet season the crop fails for at least a 50metre space along the trees. Added to this, the scrub makes an excellent refuge for all feral pests and kangaroos which then feed on any emerging crop thus causing even greater crop losses.

There may have been some rationale to all this if I were able to claim carbon credits should it ever eventuate. However at present I understand this is not the case and that I would only be eligible if I have specifically planted the trees. Once again I believe it would be far better to retain vegetation native to the area than clearing and planting with other genus.

My country has been under threat of open cut coal mining which means that while I can't do anything constructive with land that I own, the coal miners can do as they please with this 'not so rare' piece of native vegetation if or when they get hold of it.

This is country that belongs in the top 2 percent of Queensland cropping land and yet it is being locked up and unable to produce.

As an owner of Freehold Title to my land it would appear that it means absolutely nothing and I have no rights as to how I manage it. After 45 years of farming this land I believe that at worst it is as good as, or better than it was to start but its worth is gradually being eroded by legislation which is unwieldy.

Thankyou for your time taken reading this article.

Ian Cox