

## **Submission to Inquiry of Native vegetation Laws, Greenhouse Gas Abatement & Climate Change Measures**

**To: Don Meynink**

### **Background**

My wife and I are fifth generation farmers. My family has been in the Warra and Jandowae district for 104 years and we have three children that go to the Jandowae State School. Our love and passion is our family and our farming enterprise. We are very fortunate that our forefathers had the foresight to purchase some of the best farming land you will ever get your hands on.

### **Submission**

My belief is that if you purchase a piece of dirt and it is regarded as freehold and not leasehold, whether it is in the city or in the country you should have the right to do whatever it is you wish with that piece of land. Especially in the country as when we purchase a property we are planning for the next generation from the day we purchase that land and the generations to follow them.

We don't go about our business with a ten or twenty year plan, as to only look at a time frame like this would be regarded only as a short term plan for a farmer. I believe that because of the restrictions that have been placed on vegetation clearing by the government allot of country has been cleared that would never have been cleared. I have been witness to allot of this sort of clearing and our family also did the same. This country would never have been cleared if there wasn't the fear that one day you wouldn't be able to clear it. When somebody that has no idea how to run a farm comes along and tries to tell a farmer who has been farming his whole life that all of a sudden you can't do this and you can't do that on your own freehold land, all of a sudden there is a feeling that you no longer have control over your freehold country so what is the point of paying rates and purchasing freehold as the mining of freehold is lost. These government bodies that interfere with agricultural land in this way don't have the experience or the know how to best manage our soils for generations to come.

If I am to spend a property that is freehold like I did two and a half years ago I believe that there should be no way that some politician, coal miner, coal seam gas miner or anyone can just come along and tell us what we are allowed to do with our ground. That would be like the government saying you can't turn your third bedroom in your house into an office. I paid \$2,500 per acre for the block I purchased last year and on that land there is country that I will never be able to clear. I still had to pay the same amount for this land and I still have to pay rates on it but I am unable to ever make any

money from it. All up our family has th of land that we pay rates on and can't clear ever again if we ever needed to in the future. This now means that this country is worthless to us in future valuations and all it does is breed weeds and feral animals which we have to maintain for the rest of our time. We receive no carbon credits for these areas of timber if the ETS was ever to eventuate. We also don't receive any compensation for our great civic charity.

The funny thing about this is that there is one rule for farmers and another for miners. If a mining company decided that they were going to mine this country there is no rule that stops them from clearing these trees and they definitely don't have the best interests for the land in at heart, as all they will do is rape the landscape of its production of food for the short sightedness of a quick dollar over a short twenty year plan.

We are losing our property rights in more ways than ever when you look at the rapid destruction the Coal Seam Gas industry is doing to the groundwater. The amount of farmers from cattlemen to irrigation farmers that will inevitably suffer is huge. Again I say take a look at history and what governments have done. In NSW the government wanted farmers to cap free flowing bores and fill in there open bore drains and replace them with poly pipe and put tanks in at a cost to the farmer. Well along comes the Coal Seam Gas industry and all of a sudden they can waste all the water they want and leave huge salt ponds everywhere to destroy more country for a quick dollar and not for what is best for the land.

Origin and Santos say there will be an impact on the upper aquifers, as does the Parsons Brinkerhoff report that was commissioned by the state government, but some of our local companies such as QGC and Arrow say their dewatering of the aquifer will not affect the upper aquifers. Even though they combined plan to take some 2,000,000 megalitres from the coal seams over the next few years. The stupid thing about this is that they are allowed to get away with this when put in perspective, the whole Condamine alluvium from around Tummalville to Warra has had extraction rates of 66,000 megalitres per annum which the state government (and most farmers) believe is not sustainable, and the total is being cut back to 40,000 megalitres. Town take about 5,000 megalitres of this water and what is going to happen to towns like Toowoomba that rely on a third of their water coming from bores.

#### Summary

What is needed is a plan that protects property owner's rights and freehold wrights. All we want as farmers is to have the freedom to manage our land which is the back bone of our business in the way that we need to for the best outcome for the generations to come.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission.

Don Meynink