

11 March 10

Senator John Williams

Dear John

With regard to the Native Vegetation Act, it was , as you are aware, a Federal act, but implemented by State laws. It could be supplemented by Local Government. This meant that none of the three tiers of government could be held responsible, or accountable. It was a simple means of gaining Greens preferences.

When the NSW Act was submitted for public comment, I put forward a submission, addressing each point. As an obvious example of the basic inequality of the laws, there were different rules for stock routes, where they were not required to comply with the regulations for farms. I put forward several pages of discrepancies within the proposed legislation. I sent the submission through the State Member, from memory Ray Chappell of the Nationals, received no reply, nor any further communication. The NSW Farmers, when I asked, told me that they did not even bother to put in a submission, they did not think it would affect them. So we were stuck with what we got because of apathy amongst politicians and lobby groups.

I have been affected, much to my detriment. First, my father changed title from Crown Land to Freehold in 1971. I purchased the property, around 1200 acres, in 1973. Then, in 1980, the Forestry Dept of NSW tried to remove the timber. They held the rights for 10 years, and decided to log in the last six months. I stopped them with the threat of legal action. They sold me my timber rights. Yes, I had to buy the timber separately to the land. Note that the only timber removed prior to this by the Forestry was cordwood for the Glen Innes brickworks.

Then the Sep 82, I think, came into law. The trees which I had purchased were not mine to sell. The then Minister had actually sold me the trees, and then

not? The tree preservation order was introduced after my subdivision was approved. The Shire had the money in the bank before they added the restrictions.

With laws preventing clearing, preventing firewood cutting, preventing fire hazard reduction, preventing fence-lines being drivable, and with CMA officers infringing the privacy laws to spy on and fine any who might try to save their properties, fire is a permanent and lethal threat. A fire in my paddocks could cost us, and others our homes, sheds, even our lives. I am at a loss to understand how any government can claim to be acting responsibly, given Victoria's fires and South Australia's. And no Department can give clear guidelines, with environmental protection, forestry, national parks, rural fire service, shire councils, and the rest, each having their own sets of rules under at least five Acts of Parliament. To say it's a minefield is a gross understatement.

We have no rights on our own land. Governments have even claimed the minerals below the surface are theirs, not ours (note the Hunter Valley coal). Now, the NSW Government is applying the same rules to the city. If they consider your house to be in the road of some infrastructure, you are forced to sell, to the Government, at their price. There were more rights in communist Russia.

Australia has become a country where Australian-born white male landholders are the most discriminated against! Better to go to Indonesia, get on a boat, and become refugee. Then you are given a house, double the dole, and other handouts.

Peter Spencer, and his plight is only the very tip of the iceberg. Without real land title, this country cannot survive. The next move is probably to dictate the crops we can plant. Perhaps even move in the army to enforce the "laws".

There is no research done on how much oxygen is produced by a crop of wheat, and the greatest source of oxygen is the oceans, through plankton, but there is no mention of this in climate change data. Nor is there any mention of new forests reducing green house gases at a much higher rate than old growth forests.

So my property was made unviable by Government restrictions, not clearable by Government restrictions, a fire hazard because of Government restrictions, unsaleable as a property because of Government restrictions, and when subdivided in an attempt to sell, was hit with another lot of Government restrictions. All tiers of Government are at fault, and no parliamentary party has

as yet stood up for the rights of landowners, not just farmers, but now the urban dwellers as well. While Governments took my rights, and rendered my property unsaleable, the Valuer-General continues to raise the valuation to far more than its saleable price, and I pay more rates and taxes to Governments.

Yes, landholders should, in fact, must get compensation for their loss of income, the fall in value of their land, the costs associated with restricted clearing, the losses due to fires which they are forbidden to stop. As well, they should be able to take the Governments to court for these losses and others, like the loss of life during a bushfire, without cost, that is, their court costs should be paid by taxpayers, the same as the Governments are. Compensation cannot be set by Governments. They are not unbiased. But Peter Spencer could not even get into court because the court was afraid to find against the Government. An unbiased Judiciary? Hardly!

No party is innocent in this. No party has stood up for land rights. All parties simply make deals for preferences. This country is ruled by a Green minority, who, however good their intentions, don't actually own farms, and do not depend on those farms for a living. It is interesting to note that only Aboriginal land rights are recognised, but this is not racial discrimination. Of course, it took them 200 years. I can't wait that long.

The race for a global economy has left our non- primary industries in ruin, most moving offshore. All we have left is primary production, and under the globalisation we are forced to let China bring their own workers to mine minerals, and leave our workers unemployed. Europe, Britain and America point to the destruction of forests in Indonesia and South America, but make no attempt to replace the destroyed forests of their own countries.

Now, in Australia, the farms are being made valueless, because the Government of the day wants to sell our farm production, with no compensation, to other interests as part of an emissions trade off. Landholders are entitled to compensation, ongoing as long as they are restricted, for their losses. In Britain, farmers are compensated to leave their ground fallow for a year. The same should apply here.

Good luck, at last a political party is going to stand up for land rights. I hope.

Noel Kenny