

Shirley L. Burns,

Committee Secretary,
Senate Finance and Public Administration
References Committee,
P.O. Box 6100,
CANBERRA, A.C.T. 2600.

Dear Sir/Madam,

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

Re: INQUIRY INTO NATIVE VEGETATION LAWS, GREENHOUSE GAS
ABATEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE MEASURES.

The impact of Soil and Land Conservation Notices, placed in perpetuity, placed on my husband's (B.J. Burns) land; the whole of (3500 acres), and (1500 acres); has had a very devastating impact on my husband, myself and 5 children.

There is no provision for compensation to those thus affected like ourselves (the worse case in W.A.), in the Soil and Land Conservation of 1945, and its amendments. This Act was implemented towards the end/or thereabouts, of the 2nd world war. This was at a time when land was being opened up prolifically, and many returning from war took up war service blocks. These had to be cleared and put into production so as a viable return enhanced, and offset capital spent in getting the land into production. At no time would there have been thought that farmers would be stopped from clearing, as this would have been adverse to development and production. However, under the S&LC Act of 1945, no clause was included for compensation to those in the future, whose land would be grossly affected. There was no thought of closing people down.

Any development plans we put forward to the Commissioner, were all dismissed, whether it be cereal cropping, oil mallee, lucerne, salt traps or drainage - with no explanation, and complete arrogance on the Departments behalf. It is interesting to note, that as late as only last week, hydrologist from Agwest, Mr. Rui Fedosian, Albany office, was advocating on ABC radio, of lucerne being one of the best sources to lower water tables, and hence combatting the salinity problem, because of the lucerne's deep root system. (This is not new knowledge - my grandfather, who took up land in 1910, knew about this). Agwest would not wear this suggestion when put forward by ourselves, in the 90's. Kent 1664, does not have a salt problem. The S.L.C.N. was implemented over whole of property, under guise that it may cause off site salinity, and that drainage from property was to the East, into Mallee Rd. Sump, when in reality, drainage is in opposite direction. i.e. west. This shows gross incompetence, by Agwest officers. It seemed they were hellbent on stopping us doing any thing reasonable.

These gross errors have been detrimentally imposed upon us to our demise.

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This is freehold title, ^{1000 ACRES} cropped twice, and 1000 acres of established pasture. (We had to do this in order to freehold Title granted in 1988) Our land has not been overcleared, and have left shelter belts where prevailing winds, soil erosion, etc could cause problems; more so than our neighbours, as aerial photography will depict.

When S.L.C. notices was imposed on our property, there was only minor regrowth. Two workings of plough, and then root raked, would have fixed this. (The regrowth had occurred because my husband was involved with motor accident, where young 'P' plate driver did not stop at a stop sign, and slammed, without braking, into my husbands car at approx 50 mph) This accident resulted in ligament and soft tissue injury to Brians right side. Hence he was unable to continue in work for quite some time).

We were threatened by Agwest and associated bureaucracies, that if we went ahead and cleared, they bullied in pseudo legalistic manner, to fine us in retrospect - even though no law had yet been legislated. We have been left with a conservation 'reserve'. We still have to pay rates on land we cannot use.

Our family have suffered terribly, emotionally, and financially. We have ben economically destroyed. We have never experienced a family holiday, and have had to exist on frugal budgets; whilst government employees, making decisions affecting others, receive a good wage and superannuation. To a farmer, his superannuation are his assets, ie farming land.

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"Landgrab" is only communism under a different name. Communism's definition is:- Government control of all means of production, and distribution of wealth.

Whatever this Government calls themselves, they have actually achieved the Communist ideal through regulatory system.

Private property rights, are ignored, and those affected are bearing the cost of conservation, for the rest of Australia.
Is this right?

Yours faithfully,

Shirley L. Burns.