

Submission to the senate enquiry to the Native Vegetation Laws and Greenhouse Gas Abatement.

I wish to make a submission to this enquiry as a landowner who has been directly affected by proposed vegetation laws in my state.

I live in an essentially cleared area which was included in the urban footprint of the South East Queensland Plan 2005 (SEQRP). This 550 hectare area, was supported by the Redlands City Council in its submission to the Plan review as an integrated enterprise area. As such, my land as well as that of many other landowners was under contract as a part of the proposed enterprise development area.

On 28 July 2009 the Premier of Queensland released the 2009-31 Plan. In a shock announcement, without any previous warning whatsoever, this 550 hectare parcel of land was removed from the Plan specifically for koala habitat. This land was backzoned to a Regional Landscape Rural Production Area (RLRPA) designation. The contracts on the land crashed, developers have lost millions and there is no avenue of compensation for affected landowners at either the state or local level.

The intention of the RLRPA designation is to make this land subject to new proposed revegetation laws which will force landowners to create koala habitat on freehold land that currently does not carry a koala population. Furthermore the local mayor has stated to landowners that she is considering designating the land as a carbon sink to offset the Tarong power station.

At no stage were landowners consulted in the decision to designate this land for koala habitat. They have had no right of review or appeal and have no right to compensation. The value of this land has been slashed and the land has effectively been sterilised with the direct intention of forcing vegetation without compensation.

Landowners rights have been ignored on many fronts in the making of this decision. A newly formed landowners' action group has met with the relevant minister and mayor to seek a review of the decision to remove this land from the footprint. They have been told by the minister that he acted on a submission from Council while Council has told landowners that it was a decision made only by the State.

Forcing vegetation on landowners in this manner is unreasonable and unconscionable. Conservation, especially when it involves freehold land, comes at a price. The cruellest part of this situation is that process has been used to intentionally thwart landowners, to force them to vegetation through the use of process which questionable in terms of the process used, unreasonable and certainly not accountable.

Vegetation and greenhouse gas abatement legislation must be fair and reasonable where it affects freehold property. Landowners must be consulted and must be a part of the process. Where necessary landowners must be fairly compensated.

In this instance landowners now have no other alternative but to consider legal redress since all other avenues to seek a review of this unfair decision to force them to vegetate have failed to provide redress.