MR Neville BRUNT

Senate Finance + Public
Administration Committee.
P.O. Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT 2600.

1st March 2010

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter concerning the impact of the NSW Government's Native Vegetation Act on my property.

I bought my farm of 4520 hectares in 1984 in partnership with my father and brother. After marriage in 1986, the partnership was dissolved and I retained my farm of 2300 hectares.

In 1990 I sold off 700 hectares of remnant vegetation, using this money to reduce debt and clear regrowth vegetation on my remaining 1617 hectare farm.

All my farm has been cleared at one stage. This ranges from the 1930's to the early 1990's. Some areas have been cleared 2 or 3 times.

My grazing property has a continuing battle with regrowth. The more regrowth of native vegetation, the less numbers of sheep and cattle I can run, thus reducing my income and therefore my financial viability

on the farm.

Under the NSW Vegetation Act I have 400 hectares of remnant vegetation on my farm that has grown before 1990, even though it is all regrowth of varying ages.

To clear any of this 400 hectares I need permission from the local Catchment Management Authority. If I was lucky enough to get permission to clear this vegetation, I would only be able to clear 10% of the 400 hectares and I would then have to lock up the remaining 90% to exclude grazing as an off-set.

The remnant vegetation area on my farm would be worth $250.00 per hectare if your lucky, compared to cleared grazing country worth $1,750.00 per hectare. Who wants to buy a farm if you can't improve this remnant vegetation, thus the Native Vegetation Act has reduced my marketability of the farm and value of it and future income of it by not being able to clear this remnant vegetation.

When Bob Carr introduced these land rights restrictions on freehold land he said he would not compensate farmers. He has been true to his word.

Therefore I am looking after this remnant native vegetation for the Public good while having to pay Shire rates, Rural Lands Protection

Board rates on this remnant vegetation for no income off this land. Other costs I incur are feral animal control and noxious weed control. This remnant vegetation area is a financial burden on my property.

Under the previous NSW Native Vegetation Act that finished in late 2005 you could clear 2 hectares a year on your farm without permission. In early 2005 I cleared 9 hectares of land because I had not cleared any land for 10 years since the act came in in 1995.

Subsequently, I have been forced to lock up 7 hectares of the above land by the Department of Environment Climate Change and Water.

I rang the Departments deputy head for this area, and he said he couldn't over ride the compliance officers decision and that everyone is treated the same. That is a lie.

A neighbouring farm, that I had owned in 1984 and sold out of the family in 1990, cleared well over 40 hectares of land in 2005, was investigated and was let off. The vegetation that was cleared was there in 1984 when I bought the property. The same compliance officer investigated both properties. This shows the double standards of the Department of Climate Change and Water.

Having remnant native vegetation on my property is not an asset to me under the current act. I provide a community benefit and recieve no compensation at all for this.

By locking up my land under the Native Vegetation Act the Federal Government has met its Kyoto carbon reduction target. This allows the power stations and coal mines to expand and release more greenhouse gas into the atmosphere. The Government has stolen our carbon credits.

The Native Vegetation Act is unfair and unjust, it discriminates against farmers and it must change.

If gouernments want our native vegetation locked up for the benefit of the public and green house polluters, they should pay for it.

Hoping for a favourable outcome of this Senate inquiry.

Yours sincerely