

Submission

How the Queensland Vegetation Management Act has affected our property.

This property, now approximately 29 hectares in area, was farmed by us for the production of fruit and vegetables until our retirement in 2003. Of that 29 hectares, approximately 70% - 80% has been classified as "endangered" Remnant Vegetation, which severely restricts its present use and its potential future use and therefore adversely affects its market value. We, the owners of this Freehold land, have lost most of the normal rights of ownership of this large portion of our property, while being left to bear the burden of costs and responsibilities.

Originally of greater area, some of our rural zoned land had been sold along the way to assist with the tertiary education of our three children, and between thirty and forty acres had been given by us to the local Council in the early 1980s, to complete the Saddleback Mountain area which adjoined our property, and which is now part of the Glasshouse Mountains National Park. In 1974 we had fought to prevent the proposed quarrying of this small mountain, recognizing its historical value as part of the Glasshouse Mountains group, also its scenic and environmental value to the district and the adverse impact that such an operation could have on the surrounding farms. We offered to give into the custody of the Caboolture Shire Council that part of the mountain which lay within our property if they rejected the quarrying proposal and undertook to have the area gazetted as Environmental Park. After a court decision supported the Council's rejection of the quarrying application and Council purchased the site with a National Estate grant from the Federal Government, we made the gift as promised. We have deliberately avoided clearing the native vegetation on our remaining land as much as possible over the years.

Having retired from active farming, the imposition of this Act, with the severe restrictions that it entails, is not affecting our income, but it has had a huge impact on the asset value of the said land and this is what is of greatest concern to us in our present circumstances. Eighteen months ago my husband was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer. He survived months of treatment and major surgery. My health has since deteriorated. We now face the prospect that we may be compelled, if or when our health deteriorates further, to sell our property and relocate to Brisbane. As we will be dependent on the proceeds from the sale of this property to relocate, with some hundreds of thousands of dollars in value slashed from the prospective selling price because of the imposition of this Act, the stress that we have been placed under has been greatly increased.

On the present rural zoning of our land, much of its value has lain in the ability to farm it. When, in the early 1990s, we applied to have our property re-zoned for rural residential development, as

much of the surrounding rural land was being re-zoned, we were told that it was considered to be good agricultural land, and as such, under State Government policy, must be preserved. This assessment was conveniently overlooked when the VMA was introduced by the same State Government.

The Elimbah railway station, recently upgraded, is within easy walking distance (about 1.5 klms from this property) for healthy residents, for commuting to Brisbane. Much of the surrounding area is comprised of Rural Residential subdivisions.

With the constraints put on our land by regulation under the Act , we were advised in 2005, by an estate agent familiar with our property, that its value had been slashed by 40%-50% of the selling price of rural properties in the area unaffected by this Act.