

16 September 2014

Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to make a submission to express my deep concern for our current governments obvious lack of understanding and integrity when making decisions about issues directly impacting on the environment. It appears they have forgotten that we human beings totally rely on our environment for survival. Those vital components air, water, sun and soil are the life blood of our existence. Yet the decisions that are constantly being legislated by the Federal government are in complete opposition to this.

Since the inception of this Government there has been one attack after the next on many aspects of the environment. Environmental issues should not be treated as a political toy to chop and change as the government pleases. These are issues of national and global significance that have ever lasting impacts on communities and their surroundings and of course on the fauna and flora within.

I live in far North Queensland in the hinterlands behind Cairns. I grew up in Townsville and I have always lived and enjoyed the tropics. I live in one of the richest biological regions of the country and know the value of what we have here and that is why I cannot understand why the federal government is making decisions to undermine these regions. The protection of the Great Barrier Reef is a pertinent issue that is currently being threatened. This biodiverse habitat is continuously under pressure from many threats and yet our current government does not see this as significant and is willing to allow devastating activities such as mining and dredge dumping to occur within the GBR marine park zone. The removal of green zones and handing over of powers to the state government to areas of National and Global significant is also an indication of their lack of concern for the environment. Also, allowing members of the GBR Marine Park Authority to have conflicting interests with mining companies. That is one of the members works for a mining company.

How can any one government be allowed to make decisions that will have negative flow on effects for centuries to come. The attempt to remove World Heritage listing on the Tasmanian forests is a slap in the face to the Australian public who are proud that we have areas that are considered to be of global significance and that people from all around the world come here to visit them. It also is a slap to the industries that rely on these places such as the tourism industry and many others.

Over and over again there is an undermining from this government on environmental issues through cut backs of funding to environmental groups, total removal of funds to organisations such as the Environmental Defenders Offices and the Biodiversity fund and the removal of programs that work within communities such as the Caring for Country program. This last program I have personally seen working effectively in my community with landholders and tree planting organisations. They are vital programs for improving habitat and also for maintaining good water and soil quality. Not only does the environment benefit from these programs but the community and the landholders also gain many positive outcomes. They connect communities.

I am saddened and frustrated by the constant lack of concern demonstrated by the Liberal/National Federal government for our precious and fragile environment. It is time that they listened to the community. We are not a bunch of raving Greenies that are only interested in trees, this is a legitimate concern for what we as a race need to survive – clean water, air, sun and soil and of course biodiversity the key to a healthy environment. The decisions made on the environment should not be left up to a small handful of people who obviously have no connection, no concern and a lack of understanding of how things function.

Yours sincerely

Samantha Willis