

Submission to the senate enquiry on the native vegetation act.

I live on the land at the above address and farm cattle and freshwater crayfish (with all the relevant approvals in place).

Most farmers in this mid north coast area are unaware that they can actually submit their opinion or personal information on what really does affect them in the everyday running of their properties, so I feel that the total amount of these submissions received by the Senate may not be in large numbers.

However, the issues of native vegetation clearing are still so important and vitally in need of change as these draconian laws and heavy handed methods adopted by the authorities make us feel that we are always looking over our shoulder in case we may have done something wrong, like a small child in trouble.

Farmers are as "green" as anybody else wherever they live in Australia, and we don't want to just cut down every living tree for the sake of it but we want the RIGHT to have the say on our own place's, as to how we can run our own operations to try to be an efficient and profitable farmer/business person as all Australians should have the right to be.

In many cases we look after our farms better than many of the present guidelines dictate as we know where erosion control barriers should be used on slopes, we even plant our own native animal and bird corridors and refuges, we know how water is guided in our properties as we are the only ones there twenty four hours a day when it rains or pours sometimes for twenty four hours a day.

I am Rural Fire Fighter as many of us are, we know that the Native Vegetation Act has created a very untenable position for us not only as residents but fire fighters with the enormous fuel loads building up. If you remember back only one year to the Victorian tragedy, the fuel loads are still the same and since this last wet summer period the undergrowth will in the future be thicker and more explosive and like Marysville (where some of my fellow firefighters were sent) totally uncontrollable.

It maybe said, that with a CMA private forestry permit we are allowed to thin out some trees for timber products, but we must leave the tree stumps for re-growth, this just leaves a huge mess so then tractors and fire fighting vehicles cannot gain access to areas of the properties for farming and property protection.

If we can modify the present native vegetation clearing rules (2003) for re-growth forest there will be better and even more efficient use of our farm land throughout all areas of Australia, which will have many flow on affects in the rural/regional areas such increasing production levels, rural employment, food export quantities, lower food prices with higher production levels, less reliance on imports, help to keep some of our young people in the country areas.

The people are sick of red tape, government intervention and interference in our lives. There are many family tragedies in the rural communities with family break up and suicide levels higher than ever before, not completely attributed to the native vegetation act but this is definitely playing a part in it.

Why do all the things we say about these issues just fall on deaf legislators ears? Many times I listen to the responses of politicians from media questions and they do not answer the subject of the question and generally are not across the issues, but are paid well to do it.

Why is it that hard to be a normal person and try to do a good job for the whole community city or country.

On television a joke is quite often made of the answers especially when two are being interviewed at the same time, as they taunt each other over different past political incidents that are irrelevant to the issues at hand. We want and need change on a serious matter like this to at least allow some freedom on our own land.

About five years ago we were allowed to clear five acres per year, what brought about the change from that rule, and how detrimental was this policy to Australia's carbon dioxide emissions reduction targets, that we have never been asked about but imposed on us .

I hope all Senators representing us Australians show some guts and common sense for the common man and women and start to get this place on track before we slip further down into third world development by actually coming to a smart conclusion as soon as reasonably possible and recommend changes in native vegetation clearing laws, or is there just another agenda we don't know about again.

Philip A Wilson