

TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

It is extremely disconcerting to try to write a submission on a subject you know a lot about but on which you don't actually understand the questions, so here goes.

A)

There have been no incentives so far to encourage sustainable land use. Most landowners have managed to look after and maintain native vegetation and clean water on their properties in spite of, not because of, Government interference.

The government brought in the rules where you had to clear a certain percentage of you property or you lost it, and then turned around and blamed the farmers for 'rape of the land.' They brought out all the SEPP rules which were a total disaster and then followed this with the Native Vegetation Act which made many farms unviable, and then to top it all off they brought out the Vegetation Plans which finally brought about the total distrust of any Government agency. Now, the Government is trying to take away our PROPERTY RIGHTS, and they wonder why we are not happy.

B)

The removal of such incentives and the consequences: - Well, if the Government acknowledged our rights to the vegetation, water, air and soil and stopped trying to take them away from us, and if they talked to the people involved instead of listening to "others" who have nothing to loose, they may discover that farmers are the most conservation minded people there are. It will take a lot to win back the trust of country people, but a start would be made by not dictating to us, but talking with us.

Many children would like to stay at home and help run the family farms, but the Government has made this impossible. Very few farms can sustain one family now without off farm income, let alone two. We are told we have to make a living with our hands tied behind our backs and don't whinge about it.

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