

Tayling Ck Rd
The Risk
Via Kyogle 2474
NSW

To The Standing Committee on the Natural Resource Management

I found the terms of reference very confusing and found it very hard to figure out exactly what you wanted written, so I have attempted to respond to most questions individually, but they do overlap.

Submission

- a) The definition of ecologically sustainable land and water use will differ according to which side of the fence you are sitting on. I believe that our property was, (before Governmental interference e.g. Vegetation Act,) ecologically sustainable, but with ALL the existing and proposed rules and regulations to be implemented it has made us neither ecologically sustainable nor economically viable. The vegetation Act has caused uncertainty in our industry, we are no longer sure about what we can and can't do with OUR OWN LAND, OUR OWN WATER, OUR OWN VEGETATION AND OUR OWN AIR.

FREEHOLD TITLE should assure us of our rights to what we inherit or purchase.

DLWC has lost the trust farmers traditionally placed in them as an advisory board and now see them as an enforcement board only and are not there to help us.

There appears to be conflicting advice from each strand of Government, with none actually being there to help the farmer, but many wanting to penalize us.

There was very little support given through drought relief if you had an off farm income. There are very few full time farmers left as the majority need an off farm income to survive. -WE MAKE IT OFF THE FARM TO SPEND IT ON THE FARM!!!!!!

If the vegetation plans are implemented and the restrictions on our property are enforced (e.g. clearing regulations, steep protected lands, no clearing cockspur bushes, fencing riparian areas etc.) this will mean we will have less land to farm, and this will encourage intensified farming on the small amount of area left, this is not healthy for the land and not economically sustainable for the farmers. It also means that the weeds will take over in any area that is not maintained and I for one WILL NOT be wasting my time and money on areas that are non-productive.

- b) Devalue Property – if all the property is not available for use and there are restrictions placed on what you can and can't do in certain areas this will reduce the farm viability which will in turn devalue properties.

\$20,000 of income must be made to claim any losses on your farm, this is very hard to do when you've had a drought. If this threshold were dropped down to a realistic figure, of about \$10,000 this would at least alleviate some of the financial hardship.

'Duty of Care' is a big enough rule on a property. The massive amounts of regulations placed on us are literally destroying our viability and our life style. -Bigger is not always better. We are being forced to either get bigger or get out. -Some Big properties owned by corporations are more concerned about making a profit than about making sure the land is healthy and maintained so that it can be handed down through the generations. Families should be encouraged to stay together and run the properties.

c) d)

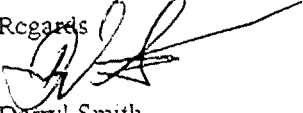
There is a lot of conflict about only harvesting 10% of your run off water. This will only work near the coast where they have a high annual rainfall. This should not be a blanket rule right across the state, we should be encouraged to store water in the good times to cover us for the bad. 10% is not enough.....

I am having trouble understanding why I have to continually defend my rights as a farmer: (we do actually a good job feeding the nation).

We have to fight the beaurocrats, and the academics, (who both seem to have had very little to no practical experience. But, are a wealth of knowledge on all topics,) on issues involving the farming community, we are interested in knowing what is going on, but this is hard when it is a hunt and try to find campaign. Ads asking for submissions are obscure and they're usually written in a way that actually discourages the people most affected from answering.

If you really wanted input from the farmers, you should have contacted each one. Just like you did at election time when you sent me 3 personally addressed how to vote for labor brochures, and invited us to an open forum to discuss these issues instead of making decisions that will be based on assumptions.

Regards


Darryl Smith