

Reginald Holt,
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VICTORIA
Wednesday 16th July, 2003.

E-Mail
Mobile

Productivity Commission,
To Whom It May Concern:

Dear Sirs and Mesdames;

The introduction of the Native vegetation controls over a recent period of time will have and are already having a significant effect on agriculture and its ability to remain competitive in the international market place.

The act has failed to recognise the difference between **FREEHOLD** land, **PUBLIC** land and **LEASEHOLD** land.

Public Land and Leasehold land are a separate issue to Freehold land as Ownership Title to these lands remains with the Crown. As owner of these lands I accept that the state can and has every right to, set the terms and conditions for the use of this land and all that grows upon this land.

FREEHOLD Land was released by the Crown and sold to members of the Community for them to use for Private purposes. When it was sold the new landowners owned all that grew upon the land and to a depth which was specified in the Land title agreement. The depth varied and mineral ownership was excluded.

All timber product which grew upon the land was owned by the Title holder, for his exploitation at his pleasure. Land has been bought, sold and managed under these terms and conditions ever since. Decisions have been made regarding timber needs now and in the future. Trees and forest areas have been retained for future purposes, on the basis that the decisions concerning the future of the timber stands was the landowners choice.

The introduction of the Native vegetation act means that the asset which was the commercial value of the native vegetation **HAS BEEN STOLEN BY THE STATE.**

The ability of the Landowner to fence his property is adversely affected because they are not allowed to even prune the branches off the trees when erecting replacement fences along existing title boundary fence lines.

Fencing costs are significant and landowners should be entitled to prune trees and branches which **threaten** to fall on and destroy their fences **without the need for offset plantings.** New materials are stretched and almost impossible to repair when large limbs fall, not to mention the danger to the public using the roads, from wandering stock caused from the falling timber. I'm sure that the legal implications to the landowner do not escape your notice and that the cost of legally defending yourself against insurance companies could well be beyond the ability of most farmers to bear.

Those farmers who have NOT practiced a scorch and burn attitude towards native vegetation are being disadvantaged against those who have undertaken a total clearance policy. Farmers who have a developing farm are also being slaughtered by this legislation. Farmers who planned into the future to bring their farm into full production are faced with a minefield of beurocratic interference, hindering their economic viability and their survival.

Agricultural machinery has had to become wider to enable farms to remain viable. Sparse Native vegetation may be close enough to prevent the passage of these machines through the paddocks and need to be removed. That should be at the unhindered discretion of the farmer/landholder not some bureaucratic bimbo who has an agenda and an income which is unrelated to the land itself.

Farmers have to compete on the international market place to sell their produce. It is absurd to expect them to do this whilst telling them that they cannot rearrange their assets to allow them to be as productive as they can be.

This legislation is akin to you shiney arse city slickers buying or building a house in the town and then the government telling you that you have to set aside a room or two for the disadvantaged and the homeless to use at their discretion and they do not have to pay you for the use, do not have to buy their own food and do not have to clean up their mess whilst in the house. You would not tolerate this imposition but you expect **PRIVATE LAND HOLDERS/FARMERS** to put up with it.

ABSOLUTE LUNACY AND THEFT.

This legislation should be scrapped not just amended.

If the state wants to increase the abundance of native vegetation then it should establish a fund by adding one percent to the GST. Then go into the market place and when land comes up for sale purchase the land, cancel the titles, assess the need for native vegetation and plant the required vegetation. Fence the reforested land off, the remaining cleared land then could be issued with a new title with no native vegetation controls necessary.

We all then as a community would contribute to the program via our tax system and the burden would be shared amongst the community, not as it is at present where the Farming Community is being asked to bear the entire cost of this government whim.

I have not got any more time to develop this submission further, but I would be happy the address the panel with some appropriate verbal comments at a later opportunity.

Yours sincerely in haste,

REGINALD HOLT