

Dear Commissioners,

I am an active beef farmer in Gippsland. I wish to comment on one issue in general terms, and that is native vegetation controls. The national State of the Environment reports since 1996 point to continuing decline in habitat quality and quantity across Australia, but particularly in Queensland. There is concomitant loss of species range, leading to in many cases to extinction. The primary cause is clearing for agriculture. While current State regulations may sometimes be inconsistent or not perfectly efficient, by and large they are too weak and too poorly enforced. The ongoing and long-term cost to the Australian community of excessive land clearing is very high (especially when factoring in GHG emissions). Offsetting and other pseudo-market mechanisms have had only limited success at best. I strongly advocate for more stringent controls on land clearing across Australia, being allowed only in exceptional circumstances. The net benefit accrued to all Australians cannot be calculated, as a species lost is lost for all time.