

This submission is made by Lorraine Anne Waugh of ....., to the Productivity Commission, regarding Environmental legislation affecting landholders in N.S.W.

My submission is that Environmental Legislation e.g. the NSW Native Vegetation Act, is too inflexible, and that all farms, although they are in the same area have different topography, amounts of timber understorey and grasses, and should therefore be assessed individually, and the needs of the owners be taken into consideration. In its present state, the Act impacts unfairly on the owners of properties which have only been partly developed. Fully developed properties are really not affected. If the Act impinges on the profitability of the land, surely compensation on a yearly basis should be paid to owners whose viable land is locked away because it can no longer be legally cleared.

The Native Vegetation Conservation Act was one of the major reasons which caused our family to sell our property at Wandsworth NSW in Dec. 1999. The property was almost 3,000 acres and needed quite a lot of clearing and pasture improvement to bring it to full carrying capacity. However during drought conditions it was just viable in the present state.

During the first 14 or so years we farmed at Wandsworth, we cleared and pasture improved when we had the time. And then the Native Vegetation Acts were introduced, which meant we could only clear a miniscule amount of land per year and all disturbance

of unploughed land was forbidden. With drought conditions and very poor prices for wool, the decision was reluctantly made to sell out. What was the point of struggling on when 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the property could not be improved so we could run more stock. We were not planning to denude the property of trees – in New England, the stock must have good shelter in the winter. And the native grasses we wished to pasture improve were mainly carpet grass, which is definitely not an endangered species. We unfortunately had marauding pigs from a nearby National Park which dug up hundreds of acres of the carpet grass whenever they invaded the property, which made an absolute nonsense of the fact that we were forbidden to disturb it. Had we not been legislated out of making our living area more viable, we would not have sold the farm, and our family would have been spared a great deal of heartache because of the loss of a much loved property.

I am also enclosing an article which was published in “The Land” on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2003, p.21, which makes a very valid point about the effect of the Native Vegetation Act on weed control in the Gloucester Area.

Yours faithfully

Anne Waugh

Attached: newspaper clipping