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Vic

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PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION
NATIVE VEGETATION INQUIRY

AS AN OWNER/MANAGER OF 2 PROPERTIES CONTAINING MOSTLY NATIVE VEGETATION (ONE IN QUEENSLAND & ONE IN VICTORIA), THAT DO NOT GENERATE ANY INCOME I SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS IN REGARD TO ISSUES RELEVANT TO THIS INQUIRY;

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EXISTING REGIMES IN VARIOUS STATES IS QUESTIONABLE; FOR EXAMPLE, IN VICTORIA THE PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT ACT 1987, ESTABLISHES N.V.R.C.'S THAT ALLOW PERMITS TO BE ISSUED "DESIGNED TO FACILITATE NORMAL RURAL PRACTISES", BUT THE FLORA & FAUNA GUARANTEE ACT 1988, WAS INTRODUCED TO GUARANTEE THAT VICTORIA'S FLORA&FAUNA CAN " SURVIVE, FLOURISHIN THE WILD". THESE TWO ACTS ARE INCONSISTENT AND CONTRADICT EACH OTHER. WHAT ARE "NORMAL" RURAL PRACTICES – AS THEY WERE IN THE 1880'S?

IN QLD; I HAD NO EXPERIENCE OF THE EFFECT OF CURRENT REGIMES, BUT BEFORE I LEFT IN 1995, THE WORD WAS IF YOU WANTED TO CLEAR YOUR BLOCK, YOU HAD BETTER DO IT NOW! TODAY I RANG MY LOCAL COUNCIL IN QLD; TO FIND OUT IF A PERMIT TO CLEAR NATIVE VEGETATION WAS NEEDED AND WAS INFORMED THAT I WOULD HAVE TO CONTACT THE D.P.I. – IT WOULD APPEAR THIS COUNCIL HAS NO PLANNING OR ENVIRONMENTAL DEPARTMENTS.

BROADACRE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES ARE NOW GENERALLY RECOGNISED AS UNSUSTAINABLE BECAUSE OF THE PROBLEMS THEY CAUSE (E.G. LOSS OF TOPSOIL, SALINITY ETC;) AND WHOLE FARM PLANNING INCORPORATING BIODIVERSITY IS PROVING TO BE PARTIAL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM AND TO CONTRIBUTE TO AN INCREASE IN PRODUCTIVITY.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS, MORE INCENTIVES AND COMPENSATION PACKAGES MAY HELP TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF PRIMARY PRODUCER'S CURRENT, SOMETIMES NEGATIVE, FEELING VICTIMISED, ATTITUDES. E.G. PEOPLE COULD BE MADE AWARE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS OF THEIR PROPERTIES WITH THEIR

RATE NOTICES AND THE VARIOUS AVENUES THEY HAVE TO ACCESS GOVERNMENT INFORMATION ETC;

COSTS IN MANAGING MY NATIVE VEGETATION (EXCLUDING COUNCIL RATES) HAVE MOSTLY INVOLVED THE REMOVAL OF EXOTIC WEEDS. REIMBURSEMENT OF THESE COST HAS BEEN ACCESSED THROUGH LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES. THE VICTORIAN GOVT; BUSH TENDER TRIALS UNFORTUNATELY ALLOW FOR BIAS ON THE PART OF THE ASSESSOR IN HIS "VALUATION" OF A PARTICULAR PIECE OF BUSH.

LACK OF CONSISTENCY AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, THEIR DEPARTMENTS & EMPLOYEES, COMBINED WITH A "WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY TO DO WHAT?", OR "WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT?" APPROACH, ARE NOT ONLY AN OBVIOUS WASTE OF HUMAN RESOURCES, BUT IMPEDE ANY REGIMES' DEGREE OF EFFECTIVENESS.

HAVING RECENTLY BECOME A MEMBER OF A "REGIONAL COMMITTEE", I AM NOT YET IN A POSITION TO COMMENT ON THEIR EFFECTIVENESS.

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