

## BIODIVERSITY REGULATIONS.

Submission by D.M.McL&J.A. STEWART

### WA

We farm a 5.200 hectare grain and sheep property, of which 1200 hectares is so called remnant vegetation. 800HA is virgin bush and 400HA is regrowth since 1975. The regrowth was one third chained and burnt, one third chained, burnt and ploughed twice then chained for roots. The remaining third was chained, burnt and ploughed twice and root raked and half this area was sown to a wheat crop. We are not allowed now to redevelop this land.

For various reasons we concentrated on developing the rest of the property, with the intention of developing this land later on.

However when we were ready to continue the development the attitude of Government Departments and the Community had changed, and at this point of time, the costs and red tape applying to the permission to clear, make it pointless to even apply.

A conservative estimate of the value of this area of land if developed @ \$250 per acre is @ 750,000, as it is now it may be worth \$50,000.

All of the Bushland has been fenced over the past 30 years, which means some of it now requires renewing. In fact during a storm this year a mob of young sheep broke into an area of bush a, and it took us four days to find them all, and to drive them out in small groups. At least 50 died from eating poison plants, which is a constant worry that stock may find a fence broken by vermin or a falling tree.

In the past 18 months we have built 11 kilometers of new fences to protect Bush for Wildlife, and to protect three of the six declared Rare Flora found on the property. These fences were supported by Grants.

We provide homes for Hairy Tailed Heath Rats, Bush Wallaby's, Mallee Fowl and a number of smaller Marsupials plus large numbers of Kangaroo and Emu's, these latter doing enormous damage to our fences and crops.

Because of this Bushland our property has suffered a substantial Capital loss. The initial cost of conditional Purchase, which stipulated the land had to be cleared, ongoing payment of Rates which until three years ago were the same as for developed land. A large Capitol outlay to fence and its continuing maintenance and replacement, and the constant risk of stock being poisoned. The harboring of vermin some of which are semi protected, ie the need for permits to destroy, and the possible total protection in the future..{There appears to be a move to only allowing trained licensed personnel to shoot vermin, another cost to the owner}

The plus side is the opportunity to observe wildlife and wild flowers at close quarters and probably some protection to the property from wind and salinity {minor as all high ground which will be unlikely to become saline}. The biggest benefit is to provide some protection to farms lower down the Landscape.

Last year we thought we had a potential Income from the harvesting the Honey Myrtle, a shrub which is made into Brush fences, considerable quantities of this plant grows throughout our bushland.

We agree to allow a manufacturer to harvest a trial quantity at \$1 per bundle, so

that we could observe the potential to damage the habitat, we received \$1400, and then gave him permission to continue.

He then applied to the Department of Conservation and Land Management for a licence to harvest on our Private and Freehold Land. They sent an Inspector who made it obvious that his sole intention was to prosecute the firm who was cutting the bush, which I, believe he must have done as we have not heard from the operator since. So we have a commercial Product which is now valueless due to a Government Department using its authority to interfere with private property.

C.A.L.M. claim the plant will not regrow, which is contrary to the contractors experience and my life time experience of land clearing. In fact the area that was cut in the trial {during the worst drought in our history} has all suckered and is growing as expected.

Prior to the Broombush Trial we checked with a Lawyer to make sure we were not breaking any laws, and also contacted the Department of Environmental Protection who also agreed that provided the Honey Myrtle regrew there was no problems.

We have suffered a direct interference with our Private Property, by an ill informed Government Department, and a substantial cash loss for a renewable resource.

We accept that the Government and Community do not wish the undeveloped areas of Bushland to be cleared or developed for farm land. {They have little problem if it is in an Urban area for houses or shopping centres}. However, we also believe that we should be compensated for the loss of Potential Capital gain, the loss of potential Income, the cost of maintenance and protection of the bushland, and the damage caused by vermin to infrastructure and crops. The current and planned restrictions on controlling vermin will make it increasingly difficult to live in harmony with them.

Yours faithfully  
D. Meighan & McL. Stewart

(signatures)