

## Submission

As a landowner, I am very concerned with the EPBC Act and the problems associated with it. You cannot have a good Act if the underpinning information is corrupt. This Act implies that we are holders of the land, not the owners, (my bank would beg to differ.)

Acknowledgement of our ownership is paramount. Then the discussion on getting the balance between agriculture production and environmental needs can be had, between the farmer and the government, with no interference from outside (supposed) stakeholders who have nothing to lose.

Farmers are a dying breed literally, with suicide rates on the rise, we are treated like criminals. It was interesting to note, in bush fires and floods the government acts quickly to ensure people have access to much needed disaster assistance to support their recovery “especially in urban areas”, but when it comes to drought, farmers who are already strapped for cash and mentally vulnerable are offered a low interest loan and told recently by the Prime Minister as he looked around the drought struck land –“sell your machinery, you’ve still got plenty of money” —how about farm aid —not foreign aid.

Ignorance is no defence – and the bullying tactics and lack of empathy for farmers is prevalent among the politicians and departments in the main. If any other occupation was treated as appallingly as the farmers are, there would be a public outcry.

Our Biodiversity is under threat from deliberately introduced plants- Why is it these people are not held accountable for the spread of these weeds? (If it were an oil tanker that leaked they would have to clean it up at great cost to the company responsible.)

If plants become a threat then a solution must be found by the importer and the biosecurity department, who should bear the cost personally and equally, as they allowed them to come into our country. Make people accountable for their actions and you will see a much more careful approach to biosecurity.

- The 18 degrees ruling on vulnerable land is onerous. It should be up to 30 degrees, the same as state forests and PNF’s.
- Green protestors should be arrested when they trespass, destroy machinery and intimidate and coerce farmers. This makes them terrorists and should be charged as such. No leniency.
- One size fits all approach doesn’t work. Each parcel of land has different soil types, vegetation and use, which that must be taken into consideration.
- Guilty until proven innocent and self-incrimination rules are draconian and must be removed.
- Offset schemes should not be in perpetuity but have a finite time limit.

There is certainly no love lost between the government and its agencies and the farmers. The attitudes of some of the departments doesn't help. Power goes to their head and they become little Hitlers in their approach.

The legislation was supposed to give us more choices – but instead it is just another chain around our necks, hard to understand legislation with all the usual threats of fines and incarceration if you break a twig off or snap a branch.

Honest direct dialogue would be nice for a change.

**Name and address to be used in Confidence**