



Hon Henry Palaszczuk MP
Member for Inala



Queensland
Government

Minister for Natural Resources,
Mines and Water

CTS 00981/06

17 MAR 2006

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Cnr Alice and George Streets
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear  Mr Laurie

I refer to your letter of 17 February 2006 enclosing a copy of Petition No. 616-06 lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

The Petition requests that the House reinstate 'freehold land rights' removed by the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* (VMA).

The VMA was enacted in 1999 due to the significance of, and the need for, the management and protection of natural resources. Specifically, the VMA regulates the clearing of native vegetation to conserve various ecosystems, prevent land degradation, prevent the loss of biodiversity and maintain ecological processes.

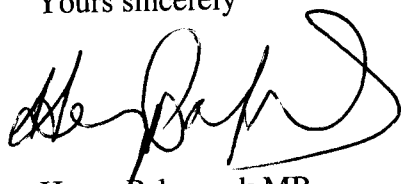
The VMA does not in any way affect the ownership of land that is in freehold title or the ownership of native vegetation on the land, which remains vested in the owner of the land. However, it is within the power of the State to regulate activities, such as land clearing, in Queensland.

Level 13 Mineral House
41 George Street Brisbane Qld 4000
PO Box 15456 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3896 3688
Facsimile +61 7 3210 6214
Email NRMW@ministerial.qld.gov.au
Website www.nrm.qld.gov.au

The Government acknowledges that regulation of clearing has impacted both owners on freehold land and leasehold landholders, particularly rural landholders. Consequently with the recent amendments to the VMA in May 2004, the Queensland Government has provided a \$130 million assistance package to support producers who have been adversely impacted by the new arrangements. Landholders may apply for up to \$100 000 where there is evidence that the changes to the VMA have affected the viability of their business. This adjustment package is being delivered on behalf of the Queensland Government through the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority (QRAA). Landholders can contact QRAA on (07) 3032 0100 to discuss their eligibility under the scheme.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Henry Palaszczuk', written in a cursive style.

Henry Palaszczuk MP
**Minister for Natural Resources,
Mines and Water**