



Anna Bligh MP

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Corner Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000



**Queensland
Government**

**Deputy Premier,
Treasurer and
Minister for Infrastructure**

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 30 November 2006 forwarding petition no. 659-06 requesting that the House amend the *Integrated Planning Act 1997* and the *South East Queensland Regional Plan 2005-2026* (the Regional Plan) to allow the provisions of the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* (VMA) to apply to all of Queensland, to help address concerns about climate change.

In 2004, the Queensland Government significantly changed Queensland's tree clearing laws, providing definitive legislation for conserving native vegetation on both leasehold and freehold land. A key commitment of the new laws was to phase out broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation. The implementation of this Vegetation Management framework will help to ensure the State's native vegetation resources are conserved into the future.

Similarly, the Regional Plan was introduced to provide a sustainable growth management strategy for the rapidly growing south east corner of the State. An important focus of the Regional Plan is to protect and enhance the region's natural environment, biodiversity and natural resources.

To this extent, over 80% of South East Queensland has been protected from urban and other inappropriate development in the Regional Plan. In addition, the Regional Plan's regional biodiversity policies direct local governments to identify biodiversity values and implement mechanisms to protect, restore and manage those values.

In urban areas, some vegetation classifications are not protected from development under the VMA, recognising that local governments are best placed to regulate the clearing of native vegetation in those areas given their responsibilities in planning and provision of services and infrastructure.

However the Urban Footprint designated in the Regional Plan does not imply that all such lands are unprotected. A range of statutory requirements, including the VMA, continue to apply. For example, endangered regional ecosystems are captured by the VMA in an area zoned for urban purposes in a planning scheme. In areas zoned for another purpose, such as rural, proposed changes of use are referred to the Department of Natural Resources and Water as a concurrence agency, to ensure vegetation management requirements are met.

As such, at this time there are no plans to amend the Regional Plan or the *Integrated Planning Act 1997* to protect all native vegetation under the VMA.

Yours sincerely

Anna Bligh MP
Deputy Premier
Treasurer and
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