

## Submission to Native Vegetation Strategy

Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

By A.J. Pedro Farmer



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For many years (50 or so) I have farmed in the Southwest of WA and have travelled to other parts of our country and the world. It is clear to me that culture whether old or new has a big impact on how a Nation or State cares for its natural environment. For example in Europe where development happened well before Australia was colonised, farming/forestry and development appears to be carried out in a far more careful manner. However here in Australia with our recent history of colonisation, pastoral industry and agriculture taking place much more recently this degree of care is clearly lacking, to the extent I see our treatment of our countries landscape or natural environment being at a similar degree of disdain as was used against its indigenous people. We didn't understand their culture, saw them as a threat to our development both agriculturally or pastorally and tried with the support of the State to rid the country of their influence.

This same attitude is currently well entrenched regarding Australia's natural environment, both within public and private held lands. Of course there are exceptions, this is primarily in privately held lands where there are some brilliant examples of native vegetation in magnificent condition, free of grazing and fire impacts.

Unfortunately however culturally there is very little, if any support from any levels of government be it federal, state or local. In our case farming on the South coast near Denmark with 400 Ha of un-cleared land and 150 Ha cleared, no assistance what so ever is provided by any of the governments that are listed above even though this vegetated landscape is of great importance and value to the local water course and biodiversity. The cost of fencing for stock exclusion is ours; the cost of protecting from fire is up to the land owners, yet we pay the same rates as if it were cleared and making a profit. Effectively what this achieves in most cases is an incentive to clear this remnant vegetation in a manner that does not attract the attention of authorities. As you can imagine this quiet and discreet clearing is well entrenched and the old method of clearing with bulldozers is now avoided by most. You simply burn the remnant pockets of bushland then feed hay for the cattle or sheep within what was once a natural environment, slash the regrowth and seed pasture species to the forest floor. While this transition takes place the canopy or well established trees survive for 5 to 10 years then die to an extent clearing is legal.

This could be avoided if only there was some incentive provided to the land owner to retain these remnant native vegetation areas. But there is no help to fence unless on riparian areas, there is no CO2 credits available and no rate relief from local government. In fact a clear incentive to make use for grazing is seen by most farmers.

Another issue worth noting is the huge areas of bushlands, range lands and forests that the Department of Water and Environment allows or declares to be managed by DBCA and the pastoral industry.

The Jarrah, Karri, Tingle forests, coastal heaths and pastoral rangelands are currently managed in a way that I referred to earlier similar to the way we treated the indigenous people. In time I am sure we will understand this and view it with a similar degree of shame and embarrassment. But at present this consistent degradation of the environment continues.

The photos I provided in the mail are an example of this management, not an unusually hot prescribe or biodiversity burn but a quite normal and excepted method of land management by DBCA, local government and Department of Water and Environmental Regulation. This needs to change, as does the incentive to protect private bushlands.

Tony Pedro









DBCA Prescribed  
Burn

8th Dec 2019,

How your Land is  
Managed, Seen As  
Ecologically Sensitive  
Managed.



Walpole Wildwings  
NATONA PARK.

Prescribed Burn  
8-12-2019.

Just to North of  
MT Lynsay and DENMARK

DBCA See this AS  
A Biodiversity Burn  
of Land of yours,  
Dept of Water and Environmental  
Regulation.

This land is within  
Catchment of Denmark  
water Supply  
Catchup & Denmark  
Rural Dams.