



21 March 2013

**WHEN WILL THEY EVER LEARN? – TREE CLEARING UNLEASHED**

During the last twenty years – the decades of Landcare – rural landholders have learnt that they can be more profitable by taking the productive capacity and sustainability of their land into account.

For instance, graziers have found that reduced stocking rates maintain long-term income and healthier land. In other words they are grazing within the capacity of their land to produce.

Along comes the Newman Government's amended Tree Clearing laws (*Vegetation Management Framework Amendment Bill 2013*) with the top priority being 'the goal of doubling the value of Queensland food production by 2040'.

"While we hear the usual platitudes about environmental safeguards, decades of efforts to put healthy productive and biologically diverse landscapes first, will be overturned," said CCC Coordinator Michael McCabe.

"This will be done with scant regard to the capacity of the land to sustain production."

"The reason why the gulf and the cape have not been massively cleared in the past is because they contain marginally productive landscapes plus extremes of climate."

"Although the Cape and the Gulf are the targets for these initiatives, the amended laws will apply everywhere and we fear that the dozers will be cranking up throughout the state."

"Scientists have attributed land clearing as one of the most significant factors contributing to the steep decline of the health of the Great Barrier Reef."

"The far northern GBR is the only zone still in reasonable condition as it has suffered far less land clearing and topsoil run-off than river catchments like the Burdekin and Fitzroy."

"We can be certain that in years to come the federal government will have to come to the rescue by pouring millions into schemes to rehabilitate land which is going to be degraded under this push for increased agricultural output."

–END–