



MEDIA RELEASE - 10 May 2013

Threats Central Queensland Remaining Forests

Conservationists are alarmed that the Queensland Government¹ will allow broad scale clearing of up to 360,000 hectares² of mature forests or healthy regrowth in Central Queensland.

Capricorn Conservation Council Coordinator Michael McCabe said, “We fear some land managers will test the limits of the proposed ‘simplification’ of the Vegetation Management Act, particularly if ‘onus of proof’ requirements are watered down.

“CCC applauds the many land managers who support nature refuges, protect bushland and stream vegetation while increasing production through organic soil health techniques, cell grazing, and reduced fire regimes. Others have recognised the value of sustainable farm forestry.”

“The lack of clear definitions such as ‘environmental clearing’ could open the door to those remaining ignorant the benefits of such improved practices pushing the boundaries, literally and figuratively of the hastily devised changes to clearing laws.”

“The regulatory agencies have insufficient numbers of qualified soil, water and vegetation management scientists to assess and police land clearing.”

“Protecting vegetation is important for many reasons other than protecting biodiversity, including safeguarding water quality, saving our depleted top soils, and storing carbon.”

“The biggest single threat to the Great Barrier Reef came from historical land clearing and poor agricultural practices.”

“The massive silt plumes entering Keppel Bay shows the continued loss of top soil from past broadscale clearing.”

“Our patchy remnant forests will become essential refuges for many plants and animals including Koalas which have already become vulnerable in SE Queensland.”

¹ Vegetation Management Framework Amendment Bill 2013

² Bushland at risk of renewed clearing in Queensland Martin F J Taylor WWF-Australia, May 2013
http://www.wwf.org.au/bushland_at_risk_report/ (p.8, LGAs: CHRC, BS, BTRC, IRC, GRC, RRC)

WWF Bushland at risk of renewed clearing in Queensland 2013

Table 1. Distribution of at-risk mature bushland and at-risk regrowth due to proposed VMA amendments, by local government area. LGAs are ordered by declining total area at risk.

<i>CQ Local Government Area</i>	<i>At risk bushland (Ha)</i>		
	<i>mature</i>	<i>regrowth</i>	<i>Total</i>
CENTRAL HIGHLANDS REGIONAL	49,081	42,039	91,119
BANANA SHIRE	40,845	30,643	71,487
BLACKALL TAMBO REGIONAL	51,631	295	51,927
ISAAC REGIONAL	45,881	19,192	65,072
GLADSTONE REGIONAL	1,180	42,987	44,167
ROCKHAMPTON REGIONAL	893	35,476	36,369
	189,511	170,632	360,141

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Martin F J Taylor, WWF-Australia, May 2013, (p.8)

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