



Gladstone Conservation Council Inc.

Queensland, Australia.
ABN: 48 166 710041

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15th July 2016

To:

Cr Desley O'Grady

Gladstone Regional Council

DesleyOGrady@gladstone.qld.gov.au

CC:

The Gladstone Regional Council

Gladstone Region Environmental Advisory Network (GREAN) - Terms of Reference

(Adopted 5 July 2016 at Council General Meeting)

Desley,

Thank you for your time yesterday. I would like to reflect to you my takeaways from the meeting.

My objective was to assess the basis of GRC's exclusion of GCC from the list of organisations you wish to have represent matters of interest or concern relating to the regional environment, conservation and biodiversity at the GREAN forum.

You suggested that you had limited input into the preparation of the list of organisations; you had reviewed minutes of the GREAN meetings and made an assessment of the participation rate of members from these organisations, you assessed the effectiveness of GREAN informing GRC, again based on review of frequency of notes on GREAN feedback in GRC minutes. You expressed concern that the number of people on the GREAN email list was excessive and not all of them needed to be involved. You acknowledged not knowing there were a number of GCC participants at the GREAN meetings.

The GREAN forum has its origin in the Gladstone 2028 Community Visioning Project. It sought to redress GRC's lack of formally incorporating environmental and social aspects in its decision making processes. There had been a demonstrated bias to economic aspects favouring the more litigiously potent entities. Social and environmental matters were largely reactive responses rather than proactive. GREAN was to be a community platform where social and environmental matters could be brought to GRC.

It saddens me to note that your assessment was that GREAN's input was only noted once in GRC's deliberations. If accurate, it represents an abject failure of the council to utilise the potential of GREAN. Quite frankly, it is an affront to all who have participated in GREAN, sacrificing their time and effort. As far as I am aware GCC have had members attend all GREAN meetings. I have personally attended as many as I could fit into my schedule and presented detailed analyses on at least two occasions, including presentations to GRC on a number of occasions separate to the GREAN forum. There is no doubt in my mind, the vibrancy of the discussions had at the GREAN meetings. It is profoundly disappointing to note that this has gone nowhere.



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If GRC cannot or will not avail themselves of the feedback from the community represented at the GREAN forum, I recommend that you shut it down and stop wasting people's time.

I was not aware of Discovery Coast Environmental Group's involvement in GREAN in the past though I am pleased to see such a group on the list. Had I been at the GREAN meeting where they were proposed, I would have enthusiastically endorsed their participation. However their inclusion on GRC's short list is at odds with your stated method of selection on the basis of historic contribution to GREAN.

Not acknowledging GCC as a contributing organisation to GREAN is clearly a mistake. Whether GRC cares to take on board GCC's message is of course a matter for GRC. I would suggest that ignoring any feedback, especially from community members with a passion for the well-being of the natural environment and well informed background such as represented by GCC, would also be a mistake.

GCC will continue to engage constructively with GRC and put up the strongest voice we can for the environment whether or not you have us participate via GREAN. Sadly the environmental voice is drowned out by the cacophony of economic development, please don't mute it.

p.s. I reaffirm my wager, that GRC are not committed to environmental protection, demonstrated by a lack of prosecution of breaches. The bet is GRC will still not have one recorded prosecution of illegal land clearing under the vegetation management act in twelve months' time.

Refer attachments <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-25/illegal-land-clearing-prosecution-queensland-figures/7201246>

<https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/9a49e739-ac5d-40f3-9dcb-241bf3cc5032/resource/7aa336f9-c9c8-486c-81a3-8bab2a52b350/download/slatssupplementaryreport201214.pdf>

Please read: <https://theconversation.com/queensland-land-clearing-is-undermining-australias-environmental-progress-54882>

Sincerely,

Jan Arens

President – Gladstone Conservation Council



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Attachments:

Only one prosecution for illegal land clearing despite 200 complaints, Queensland Government figures show

By the national reporting team's [Marty McCarthy](#)
Posted 25 Feb 2016, 7:25pm

Figures obtained by the ABC reveal the Queensland Government has had only one successful prosecution for illegal land clearing during the past year, despite receiving more than 200 complaints of unexplained felling across the state.

Ending broadscale clearing was a major election promise by Anastacia Palaszczuk while in opposition, and her Government is now being criticised for failing to crack down on the practice.

"I'm very surprised to hear that is the only prosecution seen in Queensland in the past 12 months," Dr Tim Seelig, from the Wilderness Society, said.

"That suggests that the Government is still not taking enforcement and prosecution seriously."

The landholder was fined \$15,000, but no conviction was recorded.



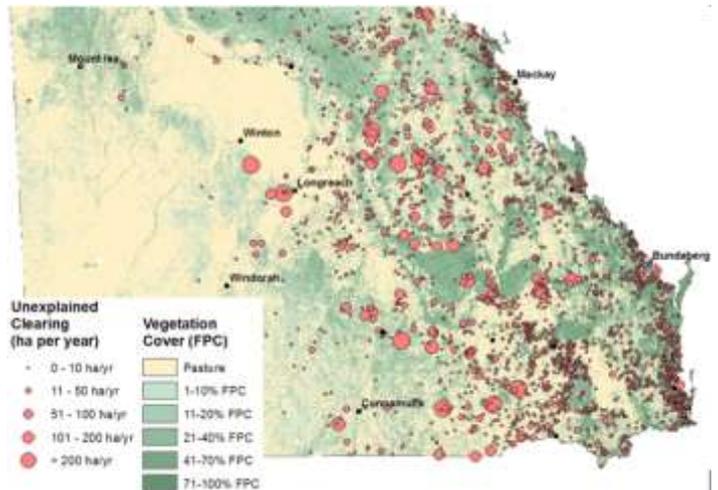
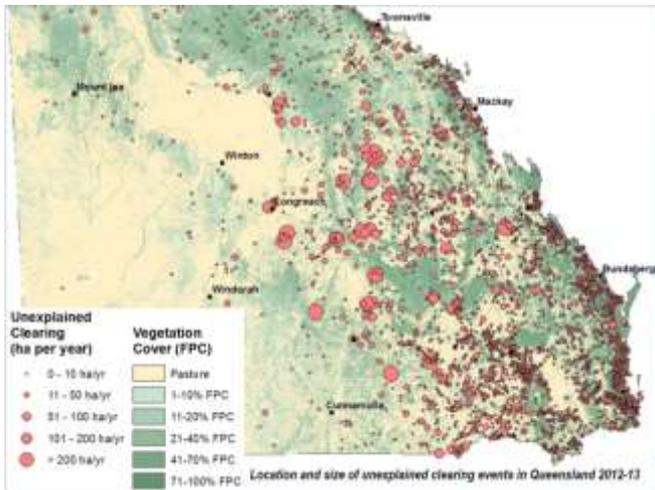
PHOTO: Anastacia Palaszczuk's Government is facing criticism for failing to crack down on broadscale land clearing. (Marty McCarthy)

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RELATED STORY: Katter Party MPs vow to block changes to Queensland tree clearing laws

MAP: QLD



“Unexplained” land clearing in our region is rife, 2012-2013 data and 2013-2014 above

True to form, current data is suppressed, but likely to show a worsening under the “self assessable” regime.