

Our Ref: DF:CS{z/ntserver/word/corres)18-5

18th May 2000

The Secretary

House of Representatives Standing Committee on

Environment and Heritage

Parliament House

CANBERRA, ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are responding in regard to the impact of conservation measures imposed by governments on landholders and farmers.

Whilst we empathise with the thrust of conservation controls within reason, our concern relates to a rural property we purchased in late 1989 for the purpose of growing nursery trees thereon.

We initially checked that the property could be used for our intended purpose, however during the course of time the Act changed and the current planning scheme has now rendered the property worthless in regard to the purpose for which it was originally purchased, or for that matter to even sell it to anyone else at a reasonable price.

In the interim, we have been required to ensure noxious weed and blackberry control and the removal of vermin, feral cats, etc. Added to this was a problem with squatters facilitating the old sheds and the property was used as a dumping ground for old cars and associated rubbish.

The sheds were in a dilapidated state and we therefore removed these as well as the dumped cars with the use of a bulldozer. Now we are before the tribunal for "damaging the undergrowth".

From our viewpoint, the conservation movement has placed a blanket control on our property without any redress by us. We fail to see why we should be penalised by covering the cost of the property and its ongoing maintenance and this does not even take into consideration our obligation to pay rates, land tax, etc. for land that we cannot utilise. From our viewpoint, the land has not only depreciated in value, it is a costly encumbrance. In essence, this is privately owned land being maintained for the public at the expense of the owner.

Therefore, we believe that when such a blanket control is placed on a property rendering it not only unworkable but costly to the owner, the only way the costs associated with conversation can be shared by all members of the public is for the land to be purchased from the individual landholder by the Government at a fair and equitable price, then held for the public.

Yours sincerely,

Don Fleming

Managing Director

Carol Sallah (Assistant to E. D. Fleming)
Fleming's Nurseries
P.O. Box 1
Monbulk Vic 3793
Ph: (03) 9756 6105
Fax: (03) 9752 0005
email: mail@flemings.com.au <mailto:mail@flemings.com.au>