

Agricultural Competitiveness Green Paper Submission

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Name of Organisation/Individual

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What are the top policies from the Green Paper that the Government should focus on in the White Paper and why?

The food industry is different. Food security is critical to the strategic national interest. the Food industry is a significant generator of wealth, particularly to regional Australians, it is an industry through which Australia engages with the world and it is an industry with a proud tradition and bright future.

Governments role is to support the sector to deliver on these opportunities. Policies will therefore need to be focussed on removing unnecessary barriers, ensuring the right mix of infrastructure to allow the safe and efficient delivery to market, to regulate those parts of industry which threaten the viability and sustainability of family and other farms, to ensure maximum access to international markets through free trade agreements, and support the continued upskilling and professionalism of the industry.

What policies from the Green Paper don't you support and why?

Regulation in the food industry is overly controversial with scant regard given to the ultimate objective which is to provide safe quality food to domestic and international customers at fair treturn to the producer and the food value chain. To do this Governments must:

Tighten ACCC investigative powers and the Competition and Consumer Act - promoting fair average returns

Improve labelling conditions - providing confidence in claims of Australian made, fresh, natural, sustainable, fair trade, organic

Ensure that State and Fedeal regulations are complementary, consistent, clear, effective and efficient - future consumer choices will be made on the basis of product integrity

Closely monitor international trade - to protect against infestation by pest or disease or the dumping of products and provide maximum access for Australian products

Accelerate R&D tax deductibility in relation to investments which mitigate climate change risk.

Attract investment from both domestic and foreign sources but ensure that investor disclosure thresholds meet community standards (e.g. \$10 million)

General Comment

Despite the importance of agriculture to the nation and particularly to the regions there is a diminishing investment by Government in research and industry development. Many competitor companies subsidise their Agriculture industry. Australian agriculture has a long established tradition of having to compete on an unequal playing field. Innovation in varietal selection, production, processing, transporting and selling is critical and is worthy of substantially increased R&D support.