

SUBMISSION.

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12th December, 2014.

SUBMISSION TO:-

Agricultural Competitiveness Green Paper  
: C/ Agricultural Competitiveness Taskforce,  
Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet,  
P.O.Box 6500,  
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

GREEN PAPER PAGE. XV. "The Government's Plan in the White Paper will be to support the future of agriculture. It must leave a legacy that attracts the next generation of farmers".

PAGE XI. "Family farms are the best stewards of the land because they care about maintaining it for future generations."

PAGE IX. "Farmers' Share has declined from 80-90% in 1900 to 10% or less today".

SUBMISSION.

When properties are being resumed by banks due to drought, when they are sold up Government should purchase the property to cover the Bank's debt, leasing them to the farmer; and when the season turns around, put the property on the market at market price to cover Government's acquisition costs.

TREVOR N. SPBIS.

SUBMISSION TO THE AGRICULTURAL COMPETITIVENESS:  
GREEN PAPER. (V.D.Burnett.)

Page 6.

OVERVIEW.PAGE XXX & XXXI. WATER AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.Policy Idea 18. Improving Water Infrastructure and Markets.

- (a) Refer also to PAGE XIV - Decline in Capacity of Large Dams. Investment in new dams only where no arable land is inundated as "we've got limited amounts of good quality land" (+)  
(+) Sir Gordon Conway - refer P.2.)

Policy Idea 19. Natural Resource Management Initiatives.

- (c) The fragmented National Landcare Programme does not warrant provision of \$1 billion over four years, particularly for staff who are not actually engaged in projects on the ground.
- (d) Establishment of a "Green Army" engaged in similar Landcare fragmented projects is also not targeted across the country to arrest the land degradation and encourage carbon storage.
- (e) I refer to a letter written on 28/11/14 to the A.C.F. following the Landcare Conference, in which I express my amazement that Christianity places so little emphasis on the 4th Commandment "REMEMBER the Sabbath to keep it holy" and remembrance of the first Sabbath when the earth was a Garden of Eden - a world in ecological balance - and endeavour to keep the injunction of Genesis "to dress it and to keep it". All living things dress a barren planet but mankind has failed to keep it as a Garden of Eden once he ceased to be a hunter/gatherer.
- (f) In this coming ANZAC CENTENARY YEAR, Australians have an obligation to honour the Anzacs' legacy - to ENSURE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THIS LAND THEY FOUGHT TO PROTECT.

As Mark Carnegie suggested on Q& A, in "The Australian" and at the Di Gribble Argument at the Wheeler Centre, instead of (d)'Green Army' the Government should establish a CIVILIAN SUSTAINABILITY CORPS enlisting our youth in a gap year's service to the Nation (not unlike the military corps operating in Norway, but achieving a similar result that President Roosevelt's Conservation Corps did in the Tennessee Valley and the Muskingum Conservancy District in the Great Depression).

This would promote a sense of national pride, purpose and discipline in young people under the direction of returning stressed Servicemen and older redundant employees. Older unemployed people could be engaged in community services closer to their homes, in aged care, disabled care and monitoring children in their early years to read and later with school learning problems.

PROJECTS FOR CORPS.

Preparation of fire breaks; Fire fighting; Thinning native forest regrowth to density proven by CSIRO to be optimum for timber and 3P Perennial grasses in the understorey; Harvesting thinnings for bio-fuel production and aviation fuel envisaged by Ecosystem Chief CSIRO Scientist, Dr. John Raison; Building and operating small plants progressively he envisages to produce bio-fuels; noxious and invasive weed control; Native Tree planting around cultivation perimeters for windbreaks, timber production and wildlife; cleaning up flood and fire debris; Natural disaster relief and repairs; control of exotic animal pests decimating wildlife and farmed animals.



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Policy Item 5. (b)  
cont.

Providing Opportunities for farmers to convert leasehold into freehold. This is unnecessary and unwise.

"Freehold" Title is granted "In fee Simple" not as people believe it means free to do whatever with the land - our NATIONAL ESTATE.

Farmers and others must be educated that it only covers freedom from paying rental to the Crown; but in olden days in Great Britain it could also mean freedom from paying that rental in fighting men.

(and) NO PART OF OUR NATIONAL ESTATE should be sold as "Freehold" to foreigners - only as LEASEHOLD with COVENANTS AS SET BY THE FOREIGN INVESTMENT BOARD to protect the land. Such a regulation could be enforced when title is transferred.

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COMPETITION AND REGULATION.

Policy Idea 8. Could breaches of market power provisions attract higher income tax rates?

Policy Idea 9. Whilst improvement to "Country of Origin" regulations should ensure consumers clearly understand the origin of their food, it is also important that a STAR HEALTH RATING be shown to address the obesity epidemic; and as Lady Cilento wrote as "Medical Mother in The Courier-Mail, children should be educated that toasted cereals are not as natural cereals, nor are poultry, fish or other animals fed grains not green grass or algae as rich in Omega 3.

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FINANCE, BUSINESS STRUCTURES AND TAXATION.

Policy Idea 10.

(c) "Agriculture is a special form of activity, not comparable in any way with trade and industry, owing partly to the nature and length of operations involved, and partly to the rate of yield on invested capital. The FUTURE OF THE RURAL SOCIETY (\*\*) depends on:-

- > Systems of agricultural credit be kept quite separate from normal commercial banking.
- > Credit should be granted for a sufficiently long period commensurate with the length of the operation it is designed to facilitate.
- > It should be granted at a LOW RATE OF INTEREST."

(\*\*) Lois Tardv. Director-General of France's National Agricultural Bank.

Policy Idea 11.

Fuel Tax Credit Scheme should continue for agriculture but be discontinued for Mining and Gas enterprises as they do not replenish our natural resources but deplete them.

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OVERVIEW.PAGE XVIII.BUILDING NEW TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE.

Policy Idea 1. Transport should be by rail wherever possible - not roads.

A Melbourne to Brisbane fast rail corridor should be a priority, with smaller towns along the route to decentralise population and reduce danger of terror attacks on the majority of Australians.

Rapid development of the new Toowoomba Range Road to access new Toowoomba International Airport - including access from proposed Mary River export project which could be jointly funded by Gina Reinhardt and Government.

Policy Idea 2. Coastal shipping could handle much more freight if regular services were instituted as in Norway - thus taking more freight from roads up the coast. Rail could run from ports inland.

Policy Idea 3. A.B.C. programmes should concentrate on Regional Radio Stations, Channels 1 and 3 on T.V. (Channel 2 being unnecessary infringement on commercial programs) and education of the population on living standards with much less emphasis on electronic music and unintelligible lyrics which Sir Raphael Cilento warned would deaden developing teenage brains and which were until recently banned in China and Russia.

PAGE XIX.WORKING WITH THE STATES AND TERRITORIES. FEDERATION REFORM.

Policy Idea 4. Duplication between Federal and State Government (and in Queensland since Local Government is no longer based on LOCALITY but on population) must cease.

Policy Idea 5. Protecting the resource bases

Written in 1900, the Australian Constitution is no longer applicable to present-day Australia with its degraded lands and increasing population; taking into account progress in laser surveys and satellites, ecology and biology and technology, making Federation Reform essential.

States should be re-surveyed as CATCHMENT BOUNDARIES are the NATURAL form of SUBDIVISION, they also serve to form communities, aiding social inclusion and integrated management of natural disasters; and Queensland and Western Australia and even New South Wales should be re-surveyed based also on LATITUDE as climatic differences affect people as well as other creatures and plants.

"SOIL & CIVILISATION" by Elyne Mitchell

The CATCHMENT AREA of a river is the natural unit in erosion control, and the catchment and drainage areas are also a natural unit of life - a region unified by the water flowing through it and by the conformation of the land.

Recognition of these principles and the welding of them into one, could open the way for perhaps the first really creative effort in which Australians have ever taken part as a people - the recreation of the fertility of their soil and the creation of a society in which the balance between agriculture and industry, city and farm, should be held in such a way that the whole Australia, the land and its

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OVERVIEW.  
PAGE XV.

"THE GOVERNMENT HAS PRIORITISED AGRICULTURE AS ONE OF THE FIVE PILLARS OF THE ECONOMY FOR GOOD REASON. AGRICULTURE HELPED TO BUILD AUSTRALIA - IT CONTINUES TO PUT FOOD ON OUR TABLES, AND IT UNDERPINS OUR NATIONAL ECONOMY AND RURAL COMMUNITIES. A STRONGER AND MORE COMPETITIVE AGRICULTURE SECTOR WILL SUPPORT JOB CREATION, GROWTH AND INVESTMENT".

"THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN IN THE WHITE PAPER WILL BE THE SUPPORT THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE. IT MUST LEAVE A LEGACY THAT ATTRACTS THE NEXT GENERATION OF FARMERS".

If FOOD is the BASIC NEED OF MANKIND why is it not the priority and not one of five pillars of the economy which is at present devoted to WANTS not NEEDS?

Professor Stuart B. Hill, School of Social Ecology & Lifelong Learning, University of Western Sydney, in a paper, "Redesign" for Soil, Habitat and Biodiversity Conservation: *Lessons from Ecological Agriculture & Social Ecology*, presented to the NSW Healthy Soils Campaign Conference, Sydney, in April 2000 stated:

Soil is the primary natural HABITAT that determines the long-term wealth of nations. Most declines in civilisation throughout history have been largely caused by the mismanagement and subsequent degradation of the LAND (Carter & Dale 1974, Hyams 1952 and Hillel 1992).

Who amongst us has not at one time or another doubted the wisdom of the deceptively simplistic notion that on-going economic growth can solve our problems? As the ecological economist Kenneth Boulding remarked:

You cannot have infinite consumption in a finite world. The only people who believe that are either madmen or economists.

We must learn from history -- as outlined by Professor Jared Diamond in his books, "Guns, Germs and Steel," and "Collapse," -- if history is not to be repeated.

Professor Julian Cribb states population driven changes occur due the fact that:

... almost everyone in society now receives fair pay -- except for farmers; and many people enjoy the cheapest food in human history.

It is argued that such changes are at the cost of degradation of the Australian environment -- the driest continent with the oldest depleted soils -- and consumers get food produced for "quantity not quality", as farmers struggle to survive; and consumers assign little value to the quality of the soil and its ability to produce healthy food and fibre.

At the "Carbon Cycle Forum" at Annidale in September 2005, Mr G Gillespie -- NSW Department of Environment & Conservation Sustainability Programs Division stated:

The judgement of global trade has forgotten it cannot exist without feed healthy soil. It is the soils of other lands, which feed and clothe the workforce, which makes the goods for export. You cannot have a labourer in any country in this world make products for another country if that labourer cannot be fed, regardless of how cheap their labour may be.

The nation of Japan relies on 12 million hectares of land, outside its own landmass to maintain its inputs for production. Six million hectares of this land are in Australia, which, until profound change takes place, will not be able to maintain its current level of exports in several generations.

Everything we do, everything we export, relies on the quality of our soil and its ability to produce. In NSW 70% of land is affected by at least one form of land degradation. In the Murray-Darling Basin we are losing up to \$700m. worth of agricultural land every year to degradation

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"FAMILY FARMS ARE THE BEST STEWARDS OF THE LAND BECAUSE THEY  
CARE ABOUT MAINTAINING IT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS".

Some farmers are good stewards of the land; but of course, farmers need extension officers to bring them the latest information, and a capacity to finance the operation of the farm and repayments if there exists a reasonable path to purchase or operate the business, and cover living costs and childrens' education. They are concerned with survival ahead of maintaining it for future generations in this old and fragile land.

Raj Patel is an economist educated at Oxford, London School of Economics, and Cornell; a former Fellow of Yale and Berkeley; has worked for the World Bank, being interned at the World Trade Organisation, and consulted for the United Nation in 2009. In "The Value of Nothing" Patel stated:

We inflate the cost of things we can (and often should) live without, whilst assigning absolutely no value to the resources we all need to survive.

On page 174, Patel quoted Buddha's Theory of Value:

Not it's ability to satisfy a craving, a desire or vanity — but to meet the need for well-being.

has been overlooked to-day by a city-centric population who values wants above needs: food being the primary NEED, yet farmers are expected to meet their capital requirements whilst University Students are subsidised to meet their capital — their brains — with no distinction between basic needed courses and higher income potential, leading the present debate.

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PAGE XIV.

"WHILST ARTIFICIALLY LOWERING THE EXCHANGE RATE MIGHT  
SEEM DESIRABLE, MONETARY POLICY BY THE RESERVE BANK  
IS BASED AROUND MANAGING THE INFLATION RATE".

Why did the Reserve Bank not heed the Nobel Prize-winning Economist<sup>(+)</sup> advice to the Wallis Enquiry nor the Adjunct Professor P.D. Jonson, former Reserve Bank Chief Economist to "Tax Capital Flows to Tame the Australian Dollar"? (+) Nobel Laureate Professor James Tobin

PAGE XIV.

"A KEY ELEMENT IN MEETING THE CHALLENGE.....THE DECLINE  
IN CAPACITY OF LARGE DAMS SINCE THE 1980s WITHOUT A CHANGE  
OF APPROACH IN BUILDING MORE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE".

Siltation from exploitation of our natural resources is reducing the storage capacity of our existing dams. The Queensland Government is conducting a preliminary investigation into potential flood storage sites across the Brisbane River Catchment, above and below Wivenhoe Dam, due by the end of 2014.

In view of the comments of Sir Gordon Conway (former President U.S.A. Rockefeller Foundation and Chief Scientist of the U.K. Department for International Development) "The world's food production needs to be increased by 70 to 100% by 2050 on the same amount of land and with the same amount of water, because we've got limited amounts of good quality land and water" it seems illogical that the Queensland Government would even investigate a dam at Linville which would flood irrigation and farm land in a 30" average rainfall belt, whereas a site in Benarkin Forest on Cooyar Creek rising in the Bunya Mountains (another headwaters site under investigation) would not flood irrigation or farmland or much infrastructure, could provide downstream irrigation water and be closed off to mitigate siltation from heavy rainfall, whilst also retaining the water.

RATHBURNIE ESTATE NATURE REFUGE

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NOT CONFIDENTIAL.

7th December, 2014.

Agricultural Competitiveness Taskforce,  
 Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet,  
 P.O.Box 6500,  
 CANBERRA. A.C.T. 2600.

Dear Sirs,

SUBMISSION TO THE AGRICULTURAL COMPETITIVENESS GREEN  
 PAPER.

OVERVIEW.

PAGE VII. "BETTER RETURNS AT THE FARM GATE TO ENSURE A SUSTAINABLE  
 AND COMPETITIVE AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURE SECTOR."

At the Global Food Forum held in Sydney in March, 2014, many prominent farmers commented:- (+)

- (a) The enormous size and scale of the task ahead of Australia's agricultural and farm sectors to increase production by 70% by 2050;
- (b) The second element missing from the scenario painting the Australian farming and food scene as world flavour of the month by others at the Forum was how to make returns to PRODUCERS better and their businesses more profitable or producers will not increase production if profits are not there.

This situation was highlighted at the recent Landcare Conference by (++) Major-General the Hon. Michael Jeffery (Soils for Life Founder) and Mark Wootton (Climate Institute President) and also by Sir Gordon Conway at the China Agricultural University (ABC RN Breakfast 19/8/14)

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PAGE IX. "FARMERS' SHARE HAS DECLINED FROM 80-90% in 1900 to 10%  
 OR LESS TO-DAY."

- (A) This enviable record (Fig.3.) can only continue if we achieve the right balance between EXPLOITING OUR NATURAL RESOURCES for agricultural production and protecting them for long-term SUSTAINABLE USE.
- (B) To take advantage of our capacity for both robust and environmentally sustainable development we need to ensure environmental regulations and processes affecting new development are based on science and not emotion. (+++)

N.F.F. at <http://www.nff.org.au> "Farm Facts" states Government Support for Australian farmers represents just 4% of farming income. By comparison according to the OECD in Korea it is 52%. EU 23%, Canada 17% and USA 9%.

EXPLOITING OUR NATURAL RESOURCES.

The application of European farming methods to this old and fragile continent has degraded our soils, the land and the rivers. This continent with its variable rainfall, no snow to feed rivers and shallow ancient soils underlaid with salt was originally quite productive due to soil biota and humus (carbon) content built under Aboriginal hunter-gatherer custodians over millennia.

- (+) "Weekend Australian" Business 29-30/3/2014.
- (++) "Q'ld. Country Life" Landcare Conference. 21/11/2014.
- (+++) M.L.A. Target 100 - Rathburnie. (attached)