

Submission –Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper

Brian Mills 17 April 2014

Following are 13 issues or comments I consider need to be addressed in the White Paper. Most titles seem to be self explanatory and some are detailed for clarity

#### A.Multinationals gobbling up Australian agriculture

[REDACTED] At the Senate Inquiry on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2013, Hansard records that a letter from Catherine King to Nick Xenophon which called for a ban on contaminated Brazilian concentrate from April 2012 was authentic. [REDACTED]

1. [REDACTED] David gave me a reference number. A few days later he phoned to say that the Ombudsman cannot be involved with politicians.
2. Properly constructed Freedom of Information letters were sent to three people. Senator Heffernan returned the letter unopened. Catherine King did not answer. Mr. Steve McCutcheon the CEO of FSANZ arranged for a minion to write a letter which did not answer any of the questions.
3. One letter arrived from the Attorney-General . During phone discussions it was established that the next letter of mine which they received was to be answered by 'the executive,' They chose not to respond.

C.Diversions – Time wasting and strategic. In March we tried to contact the Minister of Agriculture to ask for his plan to save citrus and to present our plan. His minder in Canberra advised that she was the only contact for us. All questions were answered by 'Make a presentation to the White Paper.' I did that on 8<sup>th</sup> April. We do not believe that the Minister has a plan but our plan requires selective price control on orange juice. Once again we asked for Barnaby's comment. The response we received from his minder was '[You may be best to discuss the issue in relation to the importation of concentrate with an Advisor in the office of the Minister for Industry Hon Ian Macfarlane.](#)' The ban on importation of contaminated orange concentrate is clearly the responsibility of Agriculture and Health not Industry. An example of strategic diversion is the very beneficial move of tariff reduction by Japan, South Korea and China for the export of Navel oranges and mandarins. Citrus Australia is leading this worthwhile initiative having reversed their backing of a ban on contaminated Brazilian orange concentrate. My belief is that bribery, political manipulation or whatever it might be called has diverted attention to the advantageous aim of exporting Navel oranges away from the ever increasing killing of Australia's Valencia orchards. The only party to benefit from the reversal of the ban is the multinational accused of bribery or whatever it has to be called.

#### D.Ever reducing volume and ratio of Australian oranges used for Australia orange juice

E.Acceptance of contaminated product by Foods Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ). We have received no response whatever from Health Minister Peter Dutton. We consider this lack of concern to be – at the very least - negligence.

F.Bureaucratic representative blocking my access to Minister of Agriculture to present plan on how to save citrus farmers. The plan includes phasing out of imported

contaminated orange concentrate, legislating price fixing of orange juice and agreement between farmers and bankers to plan the phasing in of an additional 200,000 tonnes of Australian oranges per annum. This would return Australian orange production to 400,000 tonnes per annum plus an estimated additional 4% per cent natural growth rate.

G. Bankers are the nemesis of farmers due to past and imminent foreclosures. There is a Rural Debt Reconstruction bill which was supposed to be completed by the end of March. It has been delayed to the end of June 'due to other priorities.' . It is said that there are 44 imminent foreclosures just in this area. The mental pressures on farmers and their families are immense. Why can't bankers and politicians give emphasis to seriously reviewing our plan to have bankers and farmers planning the phased in production of an additional 200,000 tonnes of oranges rather than waiting for the foreclosure axes to swing?

H. Reluctance of juice manufacturers to allow 15% Navel oranges for juice. The modifications to allow this in the production line are quite simple.

I. Reluctance to discuss the background to how foreclosures, increase of farmer debt, depression and some suicides could have been prevented by these probable situations:

1. The Lima Declaration agreed in 1975 for a 25 year window to allow Developing Countries to build up to 23% of world production. At the Senate Inquiry into Citrus in Griffith NSW on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2013 I tried to ask why this had not been reviewed in 2000. The Chairman cut me off as will be described later,
2. Brazilian orange farmers took advantage for 30 years as Australian orange farmers got into trouble. When the deadly citrus greening disease (Huanglongbing) wiped out huge areas of groves near the major areas close to Sao Paulo they had their own problems. As the trees are dying the fruit becomes inedible and orange trees can never be grown again in that area. Some farmers had saved enough to grow sugar cane. The cartels 'persuaded' their Government to clear huge tracts of rain forest to replace the orchards. The farmers who could not retain their land are now working at starvation rates for the cartels. Those Australian orange farmers who are going broke now does not help their counterparts who used to own farms because they are even worse off. The only beneficiaries are the enormously rich cartel owners.

J. In Griffith NSW on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2014 I showed Paula a book with diagrams 'Australia is Open for Business to Multinationals – Bribery Welcome' We are concerned about the negotiations on free trade which give multinationals the right to make their usual profit margins or choose to sue the Australian Government for not allowing them to operate in the way which they can operate in other world countries. We cannot find any politician who is concerned about this.

K. There is yet another agricultural situation which causes us concern. In the 1950s agriculture was between 15% and 20% of GDP. By the mid 1990s it was 3%. By 2011 it was

2%. At a meeting with our local member Michael McCormack we asked if he could check with Barnaby Joyce that it had fallen to 1.2%. To date we have had no answer from either of them.. I add this information on manufacturing because that was my life and because it used to take up any slack lost by agriculture. The Chief Economist for the Minister of Industry apparently wanted to allay my concerns about Australia by advising that manufacturing had grown by 28% in the past 20 years. I sent a graph from the ABS showing that it had decreased by 18%. Industry and Finance have not been prepared to comment on our contention that Australia's budget is running at a loss of \$15bn per annum. STOP PRESS. To-day is the 17<sup>th</sup> April the last day for submissions. It is the same day I received a letter from Mark Cully the Chief Economist for the Minister of Industry. A quick inspection shows some good explanations but remaining differences. The good news is that we have one to one contact. How we wish we could achieve that with Barnaby. If he only communicates with PIBs like Citrus Australia (who I believe has been 'got at' by Lion Nathan) then we will continue to see the percentage for Agriculture go further down.

L. Communication and awareness of timing are two aspects of our sorry situation. Three people were insisting on nothing happening until we made a presentation to The White Paper. The meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> April is followed by an email presentation (to-day).. Then we have to wait months for even the hope of some constructive action. We hope that the Green Paper will be available to us and that we are free to comment especially if there is no mention of the sorry state of Valencia oranges and the steady reduction of Australian owned juice manufacturers.

M. We keep as many politicians as possible aware of my web site. It is:  
<https://sites.google.com/site/nowsaveaustralia/>

## A. Multinationals gobbling up Australian agriculture

We wrote a book 'Australia is open for Business for Multinationals [REDACTED] [REDACTED].'

Exhibit AI shows our representation of how Coca Cola has control of stone fruits. It represents Lion Nathan controlling at least 80% of Australian juice manufacturing. It shows that we only produce half of what we did in 1970. Australia grew 400,000 tonnes per annum then. Now it is down to 200,000 tonnes per annum and decreasing at a fast rate. For stone fruits the recent arrangement with key retailers has assisted those farmers who took the chance of holding on. It was too late for those who uprooted their trees. Our group has concern for those who are holding on as the Australian government negotiates further Free Trade Agreements. This leads to more multinationals signing

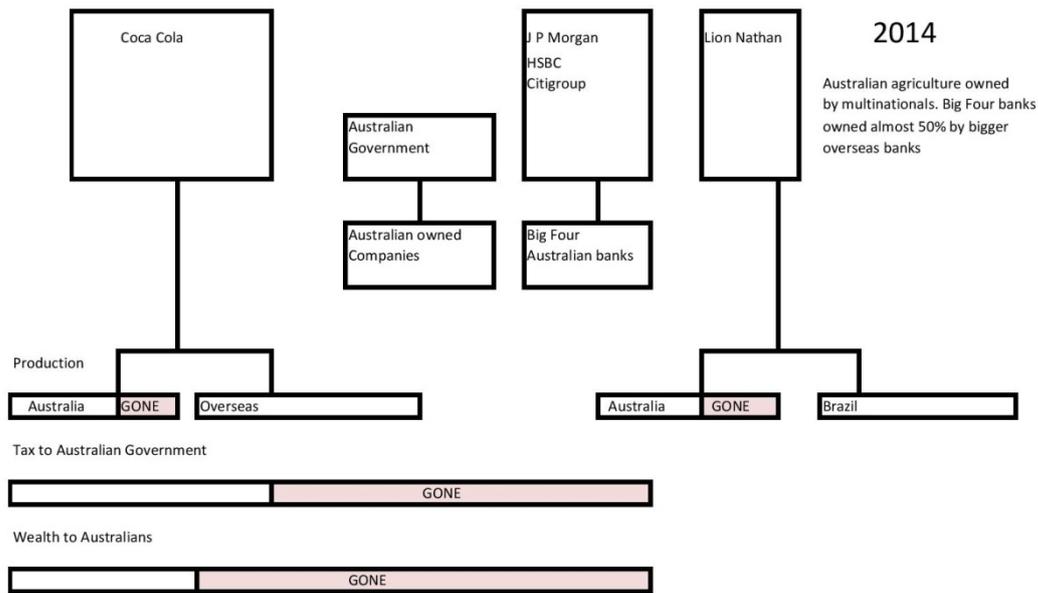


Exhibit AI

arrangements that allow them to make the kind of profits they are used to throughout the world. If they cannot make the required profits they are able to sue the government of that country. Coca Cola Amatil has just announced a large reduction in profit. They could be thinking of a law suite or their bean counters are telling them that they should walk away from investing large amounts into SPC Ardmona. When people ask me why a Government would hand over (or negotiate away) control of the stone fruits sector my answer is ‘So that they can blame someone else if things go wrong.’ We would appreciate it if a minister writes to say that this scenario could never happen.

Exhibit AII shows an Australia in 1970 where a few of the well known Australian juice manufacturing companies are shown . We consider this to be the peak of this sector with full land utilisation, maximum tax to the Australian Government and maximum farmer wealth. Farmer families could pay cash for

1970

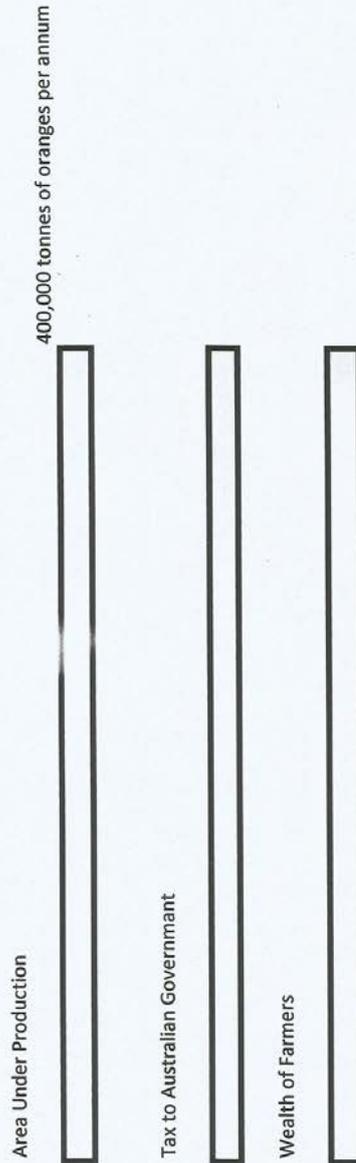
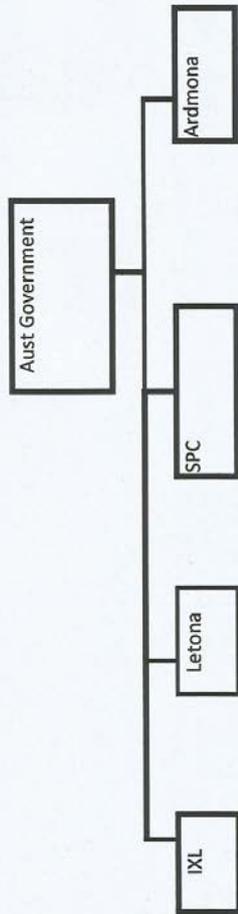


Exhibit AII

anything they chose to buy, they sent their children to agricultural colleges and their future prospects on family farms were extremely positive.

Exhibit AIII shows how the late great Lance Endersbee illustrated the expectation and the unforeseen consequences of decisions made in 1970. Developed Countries had been growing so strongly for so long that they thought that it would go on forever. It was a noble gesture to give Developing Countries a chance to share the wealth. Sir John (Black Jack) McEwen was leader of the Country Party and also Interim Prime Minister when Harold Holt was lost at sea. His nemesis Billie McMahon was a Free Trader and rolled Sir John and tariff reduction started. In 1975 The Lima Declaration to allow the Developing World 25 years to build up to 23% was signed.

The gradual reduction in the growth rate of the Developed Countries was a part of the economic outlook of Lance Endersbee. A good friend sent me one of his DVDs and I was converted. I have carried on his predictions.

Both major parties moved to policies of ever decreasing tariffs. This has put us onto collision courses with both of them. It became apparent at the Senate Inquiry into Citrus that this bipartisan group had no plan to save citrus and no explanation for the accountability graph which I presented at the meeting.

There has been a disastrous demise of agriculture which was considered by many to be the life blood of this country. A graph of Rural Debt of Australian Farmers presented by the Reserve bank of Australia shows what appears to be a dangerous exponential growth of farm debt. **Exhibit AIV** is a simplified inverse relationship between tariff reduction and the exponential growth of farm debt (which mirrors that graph). Prior to a meeting with our federal member we added the caption 'Can you understand the relationship?'

We ask your Taskforce if they can provide a different reason for the increase in farm debt. If you say 'the weather' it has been used previously by our member whose judgement causes doubts in our minds.

Exhibit AV is a representation of what I remember with great pride and enjoyment when I came to visit my parents in Griffith around 1970. It was too early for me to notice what was happening by 1985 when I returned from construction projects in four different countries. When I came back to look after my Mum I retraced the deadly process which was unfolding. The next step is to

GDP GROWTH

EXPECTATION

~~COUNTRIES - EXPECTATION~~  
~~COUNTRIES~~

UNFORSEEN CONSEQUENCES

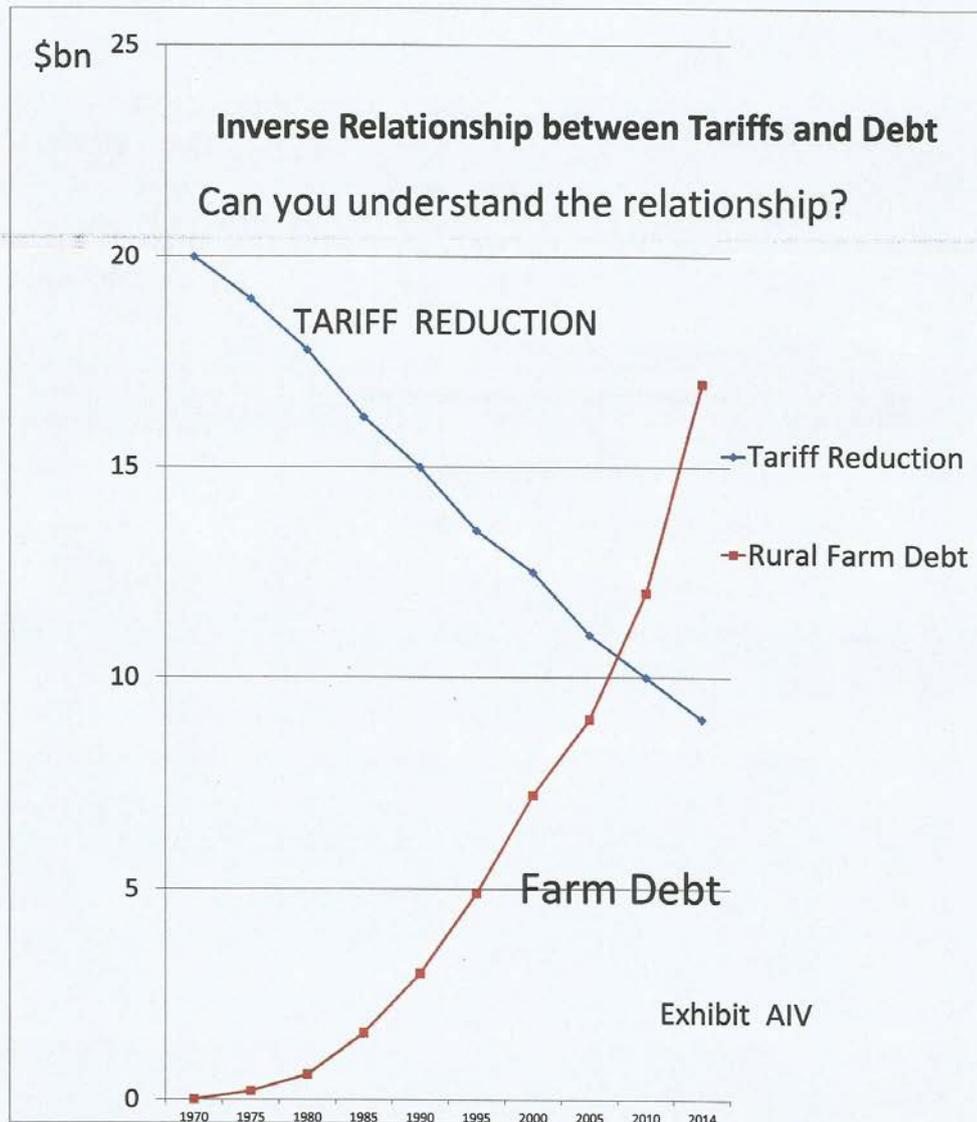
DEVELOPED

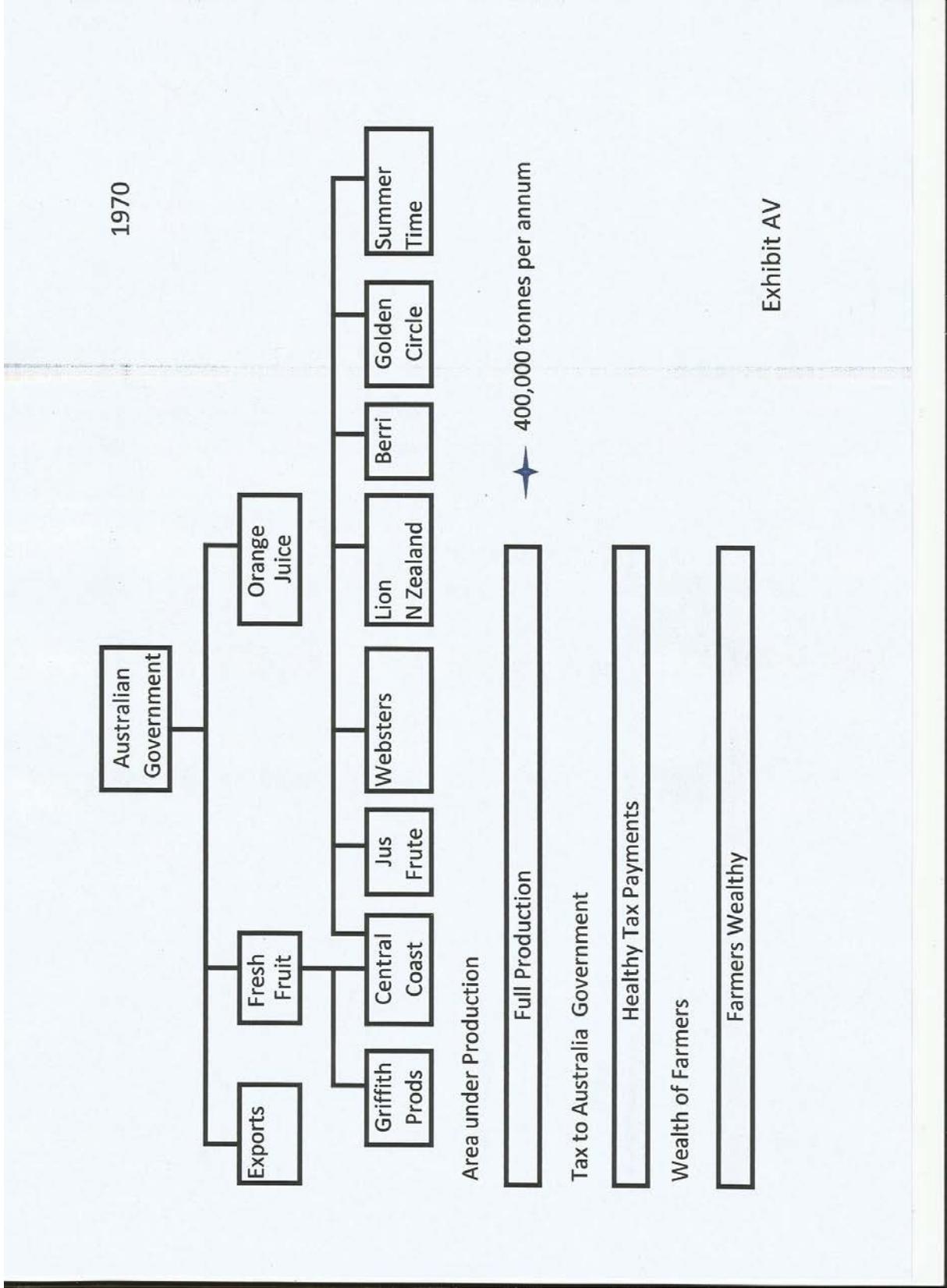
DEVELOPING

Exhibit AIII

Composite of

1970 1985 2005 2014





see this as a building block in the gobbling up of Australian agriculture by multinationals.

[REDACTED]

By chance I found a series of quotes on the internet which changed my life. One of them is shown in bold print below:

**'In a letter to Senator Xenophon in January(2012), Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing, the Hon Catherine King MP, stated that orange juice concentrate containing any level of the fungicide would not be permitted to be imported into Australia after April 2012.'**

If this ban had not been reversed [REDACTED] many farms would have been saved. There would have been fewer cases of depression and fewer suicides.

The Senate Inquiry into Citrus had Terms of Reference which had nothing to try to save citrus but it allowed me to check various internet statements like

**"The citrus industry in Australia was effectively banned from using this chemical (carbendazim<sup>1</sup>) over two years ago, yet FSANZ decide to wait for another review before banning the harmful fungicide at the import level."**

**"However in his appearance before Senate Estimates this evening, (Food Standards Australia and New Zealand) FSANZ Chief Executive Officer, Steve McCutcheon, effectively admitted that lobbying from juice processors was a key factor in forcing a last-minute "review" of this ban.**

"Again we see the big end of town putting the squeeze on small producers," Nick (Xenophon) said.

**Mr McCutcheon also made the admission that an Australian consumer buying orange juice labelled as 'Australian Made' could be drinking a product that consists of up to 70 or 80 per cent Brazilian concentrate.**

**"This clearly highlights just how pathetic our food labelling laws are," Nick said. "'Australian Made' should mean just that."**

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<sup>1</sup> Fungicide banned for Australian farm use and banned by many countries on imported orange concentrate

**Senator Xenophon has also hit out at FSANZ for not adequately publicising this back-flip until questioned by the Committee, admitting it only published the information in a fact sheet on its website.**

**"FSANZ may try and bury the facts, but they certainly can't bury this issue."**

In addition to these quotes I was able to examine my proof copy of Hansard and to be able to quote word for word exchanges like:

**Senator XENOPHON:** My recollection, and I will dig all this up for the committee, is that there was going to be an absolute ban. It was the government's intention to announce by a certain date the ban of all imported concentrated carbendazim, but then the government changed its position, or altered the change of position, following representation from the industry.

**Mr Mills:** Lobbying, if I might suggest that.

**CHAIR:** Given that there was lobbying—like “I'll take you out to dinner, Minister,” .....could that mean that the United States and other places would have had the position as Catherine King stated before she was lobbied?

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**Mr Mills:** We will get to that soon. I am glad you mentioned that.

**Senator XENOPHON:** I think it is a matter of public record that the government was planning a complete ban of carbendazim. They had announced it, and then there was a reversal of that position. It was as simple as that.

**Mr Mills:** “.....interested in ..... who got at who in order to reverse that ban. When someone asks how much it cost for that ban being reversed I will say \$1 billion of farm debt so far, and still counting.

**CHAIR:** That would be an interesting question, and no doubt some lobbyist somewhere got \$100,000 out of it.

Those who are not in politics really hate the acceptance of lobbying. We just accept that it is there UNTIL it affects our industry, our town and even our futures. My Mission was to find out who lobbied who and should they pay? Hansard now shows that there was lobbying. Some names have been named.

 Do we have to accept that no one knows anything ? Do we need to think more seriously about whether there should be a party or group of parties who emphasise Production and Health?

There was so much circumstantial evidence uncovered and confirmed that I wrote ‘WHODUNNIT The Last Nail in the Coffin of the Citrus Family Farm.’

As more information came to light, this book was followed by ‘The Fiasco which was The Senate Inquiry into Citrus.’

My written presentations had featured the damage caused by ever decreasing tariffs which are policies of both of the major parties. The Chairman of the Committee was well aware of my earlier written submissions and then chose to head me off at the pass and these extremely interesting exchanges took place.

**CHAIR:** The weakness of a developed country—we understand all that, but this is not a forum to take you through that. A lot of our destiny is beyond our control these days, especially when we have written free trade agreements based on getting rid of tariffs—  
..... Anyhow, we are most grateful for your evidence.

**Mr Mills:** When you say it is not in your control,..... Therefore, when you say it is out of your control, I would just like to suggest that the governments of Australia could even be looking at the Lima declaration and saying, 'Is there a chance we might help citrus by'—

**CHAIR:** But it used to take six weeks for the test cricket team to go to England on a ship and now you can go overnight.

This exchange confirmed that the first book had to be written. The only reason I can see for the completely irrelevant interruption was to prevent me from putting into Hansard my plan to save citrus. In the book I wrote that this is what I would have added:

1. The Lima Declaration should have been reviewed or terminated in the year 2000.
2. This might have made it easier to negotiate the start of a series of selective tariff reviews.
3. The review of this and other ‘international obligations’ could have opened up studies on such things as claims that concentrate prices are quoted FOB Brazilian ports rather than landed in Australia
4. Do our ‘international obligations’ relate to the relative richness of the countries involved? Australia is 12<sup>th</sup> richest and Brazil is 6<sup>th</sup>
5. Do our ‘international obligations’ allow us to ask about the working conditions and the wage rates of farm workers compared to the minimum wages of Brazil? Refer to Section I.
6. What proof do we have of the importers testing the juice from mutated fruit affected by citrus greening disease? This fruit is sold in Australia as ‘Australian Made.

7. What comment would they make to the Eurozone applying a tariff against Chinese solar panels? The Eurozone justified this to provide 'life safety oxygen.' They described this as a responsible initiative.
8. I would have referred to the graph which the Committee's Trish Carling distributed to each senator. It shows a group of Developed Countries who started to slow down in their upward growth as Japan and many European countries topped out and are on a downward slope. Australia is at the top which prompted our Treasurer to continually assert the Australia is the envy of the Developed World. Only recently has anyone said any thing different and it was Joe Hocke who said "A race to the bottom is no victory."
9. I would have added that our Treasurer also boasted of 14% growth in the past 5.5 years. An average of 2.8% is good but not brilliant. We are now on a reducing rate of increase (around 2.2% and going lower). In the world there are 101 countries – big and small – which are growing faster than Australia. One of them is Mexico which is planning to move back into 12<sup>th</sup> place.

Here is an astounding statement by the Chairman Senator Heffernan who appears to be agreeing with the contention of Lance Endersbee and me that the major cause of the demise of our nation is tariff reduction. It is not accepted by his party. How smart is this man? :

**CHAIR:**.....A lot of our destiny is beyond our control these days, especially when we have written free trade agreements based on getting rid of tariffs—

There was another exchange:

**CHAIR:** We put our currency on the market in the period in which you talked—

**Mr Mills:** I know. What a stupid thing to do—

**CHAIR:** That is what I meant by 'some of it is beyond our means'. It is bloody hard to compete in the same marketplace—as we have seen in recent times with the great tragedy of Bangladesh, where 80 per cent of the population earns \$2 a day.

**Mr Mills:** I know. And we have to keep on lowering our wages until we get to theirs—

**CHAIR:** I can assure you the best way to fix it is to raise the standard of living rather than lower it.

My assessment of this exchange goes like this. To me the aim of The Lima Declaration is to assist Developing and Third World Countries to improve (at the expense of Developed Countries) by reducing tariffs so I agree 'It is bloody hard to compete in the same marketplace'

We can go broke or 'keep on lowering our wages until we get to theirs.' If we are forced to be Third World we could then build up again. This was my sarcastic comment.

Then he went off the deep end again 'the best way to fix it is to raise the standard of living rather than lower it.' He is trying to say it is inevitable that our policies will make it get worse but that he wants things to get better but does not give a plan on how to do it. . Why doesn't he talk about initial plans like improving our orange production by banning contaminated products?. What a nincompoop!

These are his Terms of reference of the Senate Inquiry:

Review of the citrus industry in Australia, including:

- (a) scale and structure of the industry;
- (b) opportunities and inhibitors for growth of the Australian industry;
- (c) competition issues in the Australian market;
- (d) adequacy and efficiency of supply chains in the Australian market;
- (e) opportunities and inhibitors for export and export growth; and
- (f) any related matters.'

All I could think was "How pathetic." How could I see a plan to save citrus coming out of that? In the context of the battle to save citrus 'the enemy within' came to mind.

Amongst all of the garbage which is described above there was still the aim to save the citrus family farm. The letter from Catherine King to Nick Xenophon was like manna from Heaven.

My agenda for the Inquiry would have been better Terms of Reference than those chosen for the Inquiry :

1. Confirmation of ban on contaminated concentrate

2. Details and consequences of lobbying
3. The devastation of contaminated concentrate being labelled as 'Australian Made'
4. How to strengthen the citrus sector by additional volumes of oranges.
5. Agreement on a measurable graph
6. The importance of a strong agricultural sector
7. The consequence of not having a ban by early 2014

[REDACTED]

1. [REDACTED] David gave me a reference number. A few days later he phoned to say that the Ombudsman cannot be involved with politicians
2. Properly constructed Freedom of Information letters were sent to three people. Senator Heffernan returned the letter unopened. Catherine King did not answer. Mr. Steve McCutcheon the CEO of FSANZ arranged for a minion to write a letter which did not answer any of the questions.
3. One letter arrived from the Attorney- General . During phone discussions it was established that the next letter of mine which they received was to be answered by 'the executive,' They chose not to respond.

To date we feel that we have two chances to succeed at proving that at least one of the above is illegal – the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper or the AFP.

I am preparing to present a second presentation to the AFP based on the Case Categorisation and Prioritisation Model. I want more proof based on one or more of the above. I need to be able to present a sufficiently high cost to the victims which should be easy. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I have to be able to prove that we are high enough up in the pecking order of deserving cases. Who else are we competing against?

I am thankful for being able to make a presentation to the White Paper. Could we be lucky enough to strike a chord with this request?

C. Diversions – Time wasting and strategic.

Refer Section F

D. Ever reducing volume and ratio of Australian oranges used for Australia orange juice.

**This is causing farm debt to increase at a fast rate. Refer back to Exhibit AIV**

E. Acceptance of contaminated product by Foods Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ). We have received no response whatever from Minister Peter Dutton. We consider this lack of concern to be – at the very least [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]

Warren Truss is one of many who refrain from considering our efforts to save citrus by hiding behind the acceptance of FSANZ that none of the contaminated product is harmful to humans. Why do our authorities ban the use of carbendazim by Australian farmers?

F. Bureaucratic representative blocking my access to Minister of Agriculture to present plan on how to save citrus farmers. The plan includes phasing out of imported contaminated orange concentrate, legislating price fixing of orange juice and agreement between farmers and bankers to plan the phasing in of an additional 200,000 tonnes of Australian oranges per annum. This would return Australian orange production to 400,000 tonnes per annum plus an estimated additional 4% per cent natural growth rate.

We were becoming angry with our lack of response from Barnaby's office and sent this message under the heading of 'Barnaby where are you?'

'Hi Melinda Ref. M14/9

'At the weekend our strategy group realised that Barnaby might not choose to come to the Riverina.

'We want to ask Barnaby – (wherever he might be):

'1. Do you have a plan to save the Australian orange juice sector? We have a plan to return to the situation where Australian oranges satisfied the Australian market which we estimate to be 400,000 tonnes per annum plus a growth rate of 4% pa.

'2. Our plan requires selective price control of orange juice. Would you ever consider selective price control?

'Three members of our strategy group were in schools in Griffith and the surrounding area when slit trenches were dug at Griffith Primary School. This was for protection against strafing attacks by Japanese Zeros.

'Australia had powerful friends and our Government took drastic measures to save us. These included price controls. We won the war.

'We see the ever decreasing number of Valencia orange orchards as our World War III and five towns have been warned of dying. We do not have powerful friends. At the Senate Inquiry we were told (as recorded on Hansard):

' **CHAIR:** The weakness of a developed country—we understand all that, but this is not a forum to take you through that (why not?) . A lot of our destiny is beyond our control these days, especially when we have written free trade agreements.....'

'Our contention is that we should shake off control by the New World Order or similar. In the White Paper we will be presenting a sector "Australian agriculture being gobbled up by multinationals." It is time we had statesmen who put Australian interests first.

'Some politicians feel that all politicians are smarter than all ordinary citizens. Our strategy group (based on Griffith High School economics) answered the statement by the Minister for Industry of \$300bn of exports in 2012 that it should be \$450bn to balance the books. The Chief Economist of the Minister for Industry wrote that there is no need to worry because in the past 20 years manufacturing has grown by 28%. We sent an ABS graph showing that it had

dropped by 18%. We have a lot to worry about with politicians like that. We are still waiting on a response from the Ministry Department on national gross profit or loss and its effect on Government debt.

‘We asked whether Barnaby had a plan to save citrus and whether is aware of our plan which includes phasing out contaminated Brazilian concentrate. Your answer to our questions: ‘You may be best to discuss the issue in relation to the importation of concentrate with an Advisor in the office of the Minister for Industry Hon Ian Macfarlane’ gives us even more to worry about. This is definitely the responsibility of Agriculture and Health. We received a message from a supporter that there should be a ban on the importation of all food which can be grown in Australia. Our rocketing health budgets based on what we eat and drink imply that there should be discussion on this initiative.’

There was no response so we sent this one under the heading of ‘Communications’

‘Dear Melinda,

‘Ref. 14/11

‘You are not doing Barnaby any favours by completely shielding him from discussions with us. This is the eleventh time that we have attempted to get a message to Barnaby.

‘Barnaby’s video gives us the opportunity to have our say. He wants us to think big.

‘We have a plan which we know can give farmers the chance to produce an additional 200,000 tonnes of oranges per annum at the right price but it needs constructive political will.

‘I was very pleased with my meeting at the White Paper Taskforce and my written submission will be presented to-day or to-morrow.

‘The White Paper will be presented to the Prime Minister and Cabinet for their consideration and we do not know whether our plan will be recommended, Even if it is recommended, The White Paper will not necessarily be accepted word for word.

‘It is our strong contention that we need to work constructively with Barnaby during this whole time. We will be presenting this email to the Taskforce for their comment and consideration.

‘Is Barnaby aware of our efforts to contact him? Would he agree with your recommendation that it should be Industry and not Agriculture and Health who should conduct negotiations relating to contaminated Brazilian orange concentrate? Does he know that we are asking him if he has a plan for citrus?’

‘The confusing situation leads us to question his ability to manage his portfolio.’

The response is shown below. Have we made contact with outer space?

‘Mr Mills,

‘I have advised that our office will be in touch should the Minister be visiting the Riverina area.

‘Kind regards,  
Melinda Hashimoto  
Advisor  
Office of the Hon Barnaby Joyce MP  
Minister for Agriculture.’

G. Bankers are the nemesis of farmers due to past and imminent foreclosures. There is a Rural Debt Reconstruction bill which was supposed to be completed by the end of March. It has been delayed to the end of June ‘due to other priorities.’ . It is said that there are 44 imminent foreclosures just in this area. The mental pressures on farmers and their families is immense. Why can’t bankers and politicians give emphasis to seriously reviewing our plan to have bankers and farmers planning the phased in production of an additional 200,000 tonnes of oranges rather than waiting for the foreclosure axe to swing?

We had high hopes of the two politicians who initiated this bill would have offered support for saving citrus. It seems that they have accepted that saving citrus will never win so why not delay foreclosure by a few weeks or so? How much depression and how many suicides in that time?

H. Reluctance of juice manufacturers to allow 15% navel oranges for juice. The modifications to allow this in the production line are quite simple.

We estimate that at least 80% of Australian juice manufacturing is under control of Lion Nathan. Not agreeing to accept 15% Australian second grade Navel orange juice appears to be a feature of the lack of consideration for others by multinational companies.

**I. Reluctance to discuss the background to how foreclosures, increase of farmer debt, depression and some suicides could have been prevented by these probable situations:**

1. The Lima Declaration agreed in 1975 for a 25 year window to allow Developing Countries to build up to 23% of world production. At the Senate inquiry into citrus in Griffith NSW on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2013 I tried to ask why this had not been reviewed in 2000. The Chairman cut me off as was described on page 13.

2. Brazilian orange farmers took advantage for 30 years as Australian orange farmers got into trouble. When the deadly citrus greening disease (Huanglongbing) wiped out huge areas of groves near the major areas near Sao Paulo they had their own problems. As the trees are dying the fruit becomes inedible and orange trees can never be grown again in that area. Some farmers had saved enough to grow sugar cane. The cartels 'persuaded' their Government to clear huge tracts of rain forest to replace the orchards. The farmers who could not retain their land are now working at starvation rates for the cartels. Those Australian orange farmers who are going broke does not help their counterparts who used to own farms because they are even worse off. The only beneficiaries are the enormously rich cartel owners.

My book 'WHODUNNIT The Last Nail in the Coffin of the Citrus Family Farm,' has Chapter 4 telling the story of one of the few successful farmers. Any orange farmer can tell you the continuing move towards oblivion with not worthy winners.

As we write these books and make presentations like this we despair that no one except us will ever mention these things in print.

The Terms of Reference include:

- means of improving market returns at the farm gate
- the contribution of agriculture to regional centres and communities,

These seem to be the closest I could find to saving the citrus farmers who grow Valencias. When I was urged to make a presentation by Barnaby's office and Michael McCormack I queried the relevance for us. The Office of the Taskforce reassured me that it would be worthwhile.

It is such a complex situation and we hope that we will have access to the findings of the Green Paper. We also firmly hope that we will have opportunities for communication. Meanwhile we wonder if anyone from the Taskforce will make enquiries about Australia's seemingly deadly association with Brazil.

As an engineer and consultant I often prepared Terms of Reference. If I was preparing something for Valencia farmers for the next generation or two it would be something like:

- Support petition to ban contamination food and drink imports.
- Be aware of contamination tests of imported food – who does it, how frequently and with what results.
- Be critical of FSANZ acceptable levels
- Be aware of moves to legislate selective price fixing of orange juice and the means of enforcing it.
- Assist with budget of 'The Average Valencia Farmer.'
- Be aware of plans for moves to return to 400,000 tonnes per annum of Australian orange growing.
- Consider moves to reduce the control of multinationals of Australian juice and beer manufacturing.
- Be involved with planning for a possible return of family farming.
- When Valencia farming is starting to be profitable again encourage other agricultural sectors. Refer to the dramatic downturn based on percentage figures section starting from 15 to 20% of GDP in the 1950s.

**J. In Griffith NSW on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2014 I showed Paula a book with diagrams 'Australia is Open for Business to Multinationals [REDACTED]' We are concerned about the negotiations on free trade which give multinationals the**

**right to make their usual profit margins or choose to sue the Australian Government for not allowing them to operate in the way which they can operate in other world countries. We cannot find any politician who is concerned about this.**

We refer the taskforce back to Exhibit AI and how multinationals are gobbling up Australian agriculture.

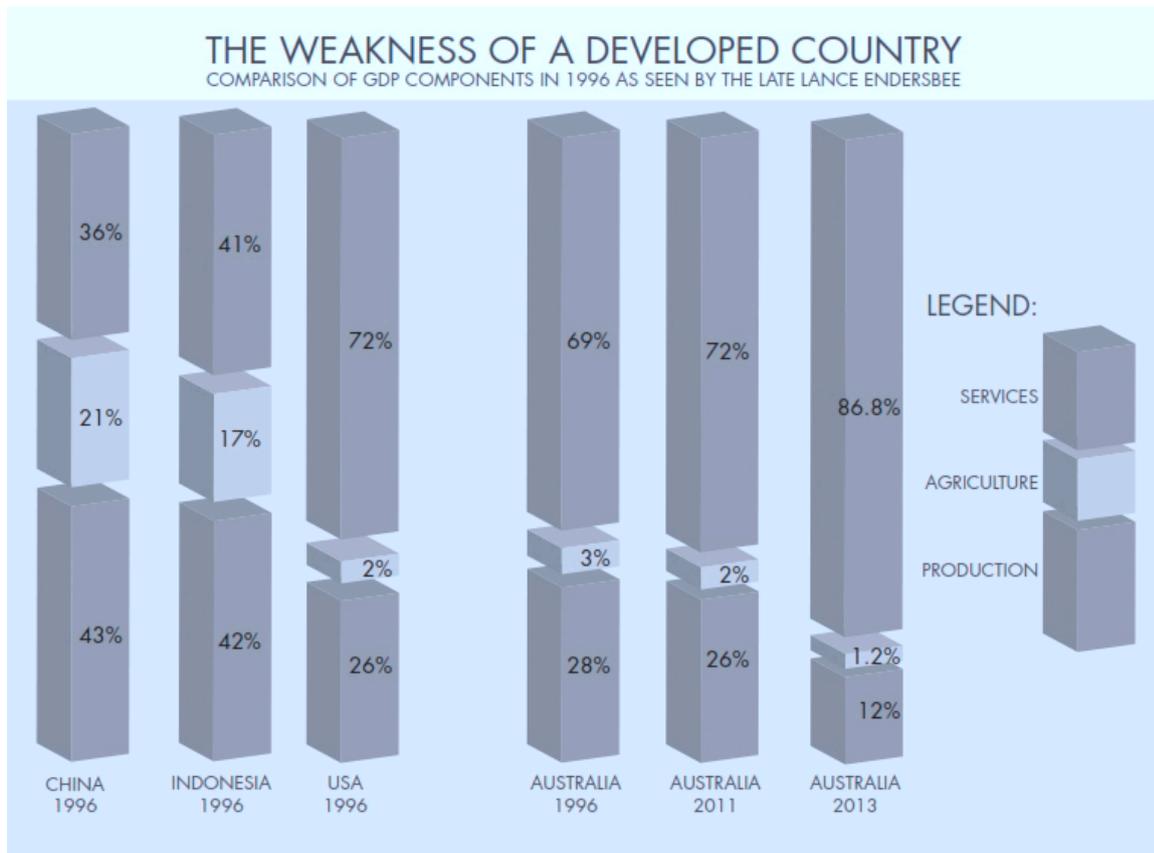
**K. There is yet another agricultural situation which causes us concern.** In the 1950s agriculture was between 15% and 20% of GDP. By the mid 1990s it was 3%. By 2011 it was 2%. At a meeting with our local member Michael McCormack we asked if he could check with Barnaby Joyce that it had fallen to 1.2%. To date we have had no answer. I add this information on manufacturing because that was my life and because it used to take up any slack lost by agriculture. The Chief Economist for the Minister of Industry apparently wanted to allay my concerns about Australia by advising that manufacturing had grown by 28% in the past 20 years. I sent a graph from the ABS showing that it had decreased by 18%. Industry and Finance have not been prepared to comment on our contention that Australia's budget is running at a loss of \$15bn per annum

Agriculture was absolutely critical in getting Australia on its feet in the early 1900s. The Second World War was the impetus for making us self sufficient as the Japanese threatened our very survival. Our manufacturing became world class. I was proud to be a part of it. Exhibit AVI was developed by Lance Endersbee. We were hard working, self reliant people. Australia enjoyed levels of agriculture and manufacturing similar to a Developing Country as shown to the left of Exhibit AVI.

We were producing our own steel, we were designing and exporting farm machinery and every drop of orange juice sold was Australian and healthy – so were we.

Then we realised the wealth of our mineral resources and much of my construction work was in the North West of WA. We were The Lucky Country. We made demands of our politicians and became one of the world's 'greatest' (not the correct word) Nanny States. I was horrified when I saw the four left hand columns of Exhibit AVI. My eyes went straight to 3% for agriculture in 1996. It was 2011 and I checked it out. By then it had reduced to 2%. Now my understanding is that it is 1.2%. I have asked Barnaby in Agriculture and Michael McCormack in Finance to check – neither have done so. My High School economics and Lance's DVD call for Production Manufacturing plus Agriculture to be 30% of GDP to balance 70% of Services. We used to do that

easily and could still have enough left over to build the Snowy Mountains Project.



### Exhibit AVI

I received a letter from Ian Macfarlane saying that in 2012 Industry Exports (which has replaced manufacturing. We are making a transition to who knows what?) were \$30bn. I said that they should be \$45bn. No one has said yes they should be or no they do not have to be. It seems to me that no one knows.

**L. Communication and awareness of timing are two aspects of our sorry situation.** Three people were insisting on nothing happening until we made a presentation to The White Paper. The meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> April is followed by an email presentation. Then we have to wait months for even the hope of some constructive action. We hope that the Green Paper will be available to us and that we are free to comment especially if there is no mention of the sorry state of Valencia oranges and the steady reduction of Australian owned juice manufacturers. Meanwhile we will be following such initiatives as more books, a film and Social Media. Somehow we want to describe to the Prime Minister and

Cabinet the agony which results from those who cannot understand the importance of timing. In our books we have warnings to Warren Truss and others going back to 1989.

M. We keep as many politicians as possible aware of my web site. It is:  
<https://sites.google.com/site/nowsaveaustralia/>

