

“Grasses, Trees, Climate and Food Vegetation Management in Australia.”

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A Submission from:

The Carbon Sense Coalition
www.carbon-sense.com

to the

Australian Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

in response to their requests for submissions on the:

**“Inquiry into Native Vegetation Laws,
Greenhouse Gas Abatement and Climate Change Measures.”**

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Submissions due by Friday 5 March 2010 to: fpa.sen@aph.gov.au

A Hint for our politicians?

“DON’T FIGHT FARMERS”.

A sign which once graced the back of a door in the office of a well known President of the ACTU.

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Introduction and Summary

This submission considers the effect on Australian native vegetation resulting from past changes in land management and considers the likely effects of the Native Vegetation Laws and other measures related to Greenhouse Gas Abatement Legislation.

From the time of aboriginal settlement to the present day, the grasslands and open forests of Australia have played a crucial role in providing food for the human inhabitants.

The aboriginal settlers lived mainly as hunter gatherers, hunting herbivorous marsupials, gathering other native foods, and maintaining the grasslands for the marsupials by the use of fire.

The first white squatters introduced sheep and cattle, but made few immediate changes to vegetation management – the properties were large, there were few fences except near the homesteads, and the grasslands were preserved and renewed by the use of fire.

The major land changes came with closer settlement and sub-division of land for “free selectors”. These blocks soon became fenced, animal impact became more intense, more land was cultivated and Government policy encouraged and mandated that land be cleared of trees.

With the growth of the Green movement in recent decades, there has developed a growing urban criticism of grazing animals, strong opposition to the clearing or harvesting of any native trees and a persistent push to contain or even remove all introduced animals and plants. This worship of anything that can be labelled as “Native” culminated in the sudden banning of all regrowth clearing.

This action was precipitated to avoid likely liabilities for carbon dioxide emissions which were entrenched when the Rudd government signed the Kyoto Agreement and then assumed more obligations after Copenhagen. The bans were introduced in a devious fashion involving Federal and State co-operation to avoid the Commonwealth Constitutional ban on acquiring property without paying just compensation.

These bans and the related property controls apply to all landowners, leasehold and freehold. They have damaged the livestock carrying capacity and have already caused a decrease in the value of affected properties. These bans, plus the misguided government promotion of ethanol production and carbon credit forestry, and the likely cost tsunami that would result should the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme be enacted, have created a climate of concern in the bush.

This increasing concern, culminating with the hunger strike protest by landowner Peter Spencer, has added urgency to this problem.

It is recommended that the Senate Committee should support the abolition of these bans and oppose every proposed measure that increases uncertainty, sterilises land, imposes new costs, creates new taxes or erodes property rights for Australian landowners.

Other initiatives that would help to improve long term innovation and management of Australia’s rural land are suggested.

The Terms of Reference (an extract from the Senate Papers)

On 4 February 2010 the Senate referred the following matter to the Finance and Public Administration References Committee for inquiry and report by 30 April 2010:

- (1) The impact of native vegetation laws and legislated greenhouse gas abatement measures on landholders, including:
 - (a) any diminution of land asset value and productivity as a result of such laws;
 - (b) compensation arrangements to landholders resulting from the imposition of such laws;
 - (c) the appropriateness of the method of calculation of asset value in the determination of compensation arrangements; and
 - (d) any other related matter.
- (2) In conducting this inquiry, the committee must also examine the impact of the Government's proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme and the range of measures related to climate change announced by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Abbott) on 2 February 2010.

This submission covers, to varying extents, all aspects of the terms of reference, and some not mentioned but which are very relevant.

Natural Vegetation Management

All life forms need competitors and predators to keep them healthy.

The pre-Captain Cook Australian landscape evolved under fierce competition. Trees, herbs and grass were in constant competition with one another for access to soil, sunlight and water. Insects and herbivores preyed on these plants, and omnivores and carnivores preyed on insects, herbivores and other carnivores.

The most obvious features of the land biosphere in Australia were vast open forests and grasslands supporting large populations of marsupials and birds which supported smaller populations of aboriginal and dingo predators. In higher rainfall areas, trees tended to form dense forests that proved largely impervious to bush fires, grass, grazing marsupials and humans.

This natural life management system, involving vigorous competition among plants, herbivores and carnivores, has proved to be the secret to sustainable life in all eco-systems on earth. But there is no "balance" in nature. There are always growing and fading species as conditions change and species adapt and compete. New species invade habitats, some species are extinguished, some stagnate and some bloom, but life continues.

Every successful human tribe has learned how to access and defend territory. To survive for the long term they must also learn how to sustainably manage water, land, plants and animals.

The Australian bush provided the two absolute necessities of life - water and all of the carbon foods (grasses and their seeds, fruits, vegetables, honey, fish, eggs, insects and meat). Once these two essential ingredients of life are satisfied, humans can focus on the satisfaction of other needs – better clothing, permanent shelter, infrastructure, culture, entertainment, football and fulfilment. History shows that these activities have always flourished best during the periods of abundance which accompany cycles of natural global warming.

The Role of Fires in Vegetation Management

When Captain Cook first sailed up the east coast of Australia he remarked that the whole place seemed to be on fire. Smoke from bush fires rose from many places in Southern Queensland.

Fires have been part of natural vegetation evolution and management in every place with a well defined wet and dry season. Bushfires and wildfires are part of the history of rural Australia, the Prairies and Pampas of the Americas and the Veldts of Africa. Many of these natural grasslands were treeless before white settlement.

The first bushfires were probably started by lightning strikes.

Lightning is the friend of the natural grasslands.

Most grasses have seeded and the seeds have fallen to the ground before the storm season. Gathering storms often generate “dry lightning” before the rains. This creates nitrogen fertiliser in the atmosphere, and may set fire to the grass. The fire clears away moribund or competitive vegetation, and leaves a film of ash fertiliser on the ground. Then comes the rain, laced with aerial fertilisers created by lightning in the atmosphere from nitrogen, carbon dioxide and oxygen (ozone/peroxide).

This natural two-stage magic soon paints the grasslands green. Providing the fire was not too intense, some plant roots (grasses, herbs and trees) survive. These re-shoot soon after the rain. Other seeds survive the fires and also sprout.

Vegetation unable to cope with fires is slowly eliminated and replaced with species that tailored their reproduction processes to fit the fire regime – plants and seeds developed thick tough bark and casings able to survive most fires. Some even evolved to rely on fires to ensure that they germinated in the favourable conditions that often accompany storms.

Vegetation Management by Aboriginal Settlers

The first black settlers were probably terrified by the fierce bushfires they witnessed in their new land. But they observed and learned how to survive in and manage that environment. Marsupials were their chief source of protein over much of Australia. The black settlers quickly learned that marsupials were attracted to open grassland, especially when fresh new grass appeared after fires and storm rain. Some observant hunter noticed that many small fires lit late in the day were less destructive than one huge mid-day bushfire. Others learnt from him. Soon they learned that a series of small fires at different times provided a succession of new pastures. This maintained the grasslands and replenished the food for marsupials and humans. And, mimicking nature, both black and white settlers learned to wait until storm rains were imminent before lighting bushfires. The trees, pastures and animals evolved to thrive in this enhanced environment.

This system was continued by the early white settlers and only changed when fencing, closer settlement, cultivation and government regulations started to affect Australia's landscape.

Fires to control tree regrowth and stimulate grasses shaped the face of Australia. They were part of a vegetation management policy used by aboriginal and white settlers for far longer than any Australian parliament has been trying to dictate vegetation control policy.

There is continual and fierce competition between these two big vegetation classes – grasses and trees. Eucalypts are well equipped to fight this battle without bureaucratic help. Once established, they tend to poison their immediate area for pastures and, if allowed to multiply, trees convert the largely bacterial grassland soil microbes into tree-friendly fungal dominated sub-soil.

Governments need to tread carefully before deciding to intervene massively on one side of this battle, especially when food for millions of humans depends on the outcome.

For more information on aboriginal vegetation management see "Triumph of the Nomads" by Geoffrey Blainey, Chapter 5, A Burning Continent pp77-82.

The Effect of Property Boundaries on Land Management

All humans are territorial animals – they select, mark and defend the territory needed to provide their food, shelter or livelihood. They do this individually or collectively in bands ranging from one family to great tribes and empires.

Aborigines did not have fencing wire or theodolites, so tribal property boundaries were determined by sensible natural boundaries such as rivers, lakes, forests or mountains. This made property boundaries easy to recognise and defend.

The first white people to settle most areas of Queensland were pioneering prospectors and squatters. The squatters' blocks were unfenced at first and shepherds were employed to protect flocks from rustlers, dingos and aborigines. The boundaries of these large stations generally followed natural features.

But the squatters and prospectors were soon followed by the surveyors and the regulators who needed to know and record who was using land and mineral resources so they knew who to tax and regulate.

Soon government surveyors were subdividing the land for the free selectors. White-man land sub-divisions are generally straight lines that largely ignore topography, land types and vegetation, making sensible land and vegetation management more difficult.

Naturally most landowners give priority to marking and fencing their boundary. Sometimes construction of boundary fences was a condition of the land grant. Fences followed straight survey lines, up and down hills, across creeks, along the sides of steep slopes and through thick scrub - all stupid places for fences. This silly land division pattern often encouraged soil erosion, made fence maintenance difficult, and allowed overgrowth of fences by trees thus facilitating the subsequent destruction of fences by bushfires and falling trees.

One useful policy change would be to make it cheaper and simpler for neighbours to adjust property boundaries to positions that would make care of land, water, soil, fences, tracks, firebreaks and livestock easier. All that should be required is agreement of both landowners – there is no need for official second-guessing.

Vegetation Management by the White Settlers

All pioneering settlers, black and white, found that the best places to settle were where the food could be most easily won – along the coast and along the fertile river flats.

But Australia is a huge place and much country is not coastline or river flats – there are vast inland plains, hilly country and deserts. Many settlers had to discover how to produce food economically and sustainably from this harsher land.

White settlers relied on a few simple implements to manage vegetation to produce food – tools like the axe, mattock, crowbar, shovel and scythe; a milking cow, a draft horse, a dray, a plough and some seeds; a pea rifle and a tin of wax matches. In the areas with better soil, the axe, mattock and fire cleared space in the thick forests for cultivation using the horse and plough. The grasslands were maintained mainly with fire.

In more recent times, often with the permission or active support of governments, large tracts of land were cleared using bulldozers. But the eucalypt and brigalow are tough resilient plants. Recurring droughts and excessive taxes made it difficult for some landowners to control the regrowth and poorly cleared trees started to reclaim the land. Much of this land is now degenerating towards a progressively unproductive state because of the land clearing bans.

Fencing the boundaries has brought costs and benefits. The definition of exclusive occupation of territory has permitted landowners to improve their land and benefit from the improvements. This led to more intensive vegetation and animal management and greatly increased the production of food. However it also restricted the ability of grazing animals or their owners to move on when their land or pasture is devastated by drought, flood or fire.

Changes in Natural Vegetation since White Settlement

There have been three major changes in natural vegetation since white settlement:

1. There are generally more trees in the open forests and grasslands.
2. New weeds (eg lantana) and useful new plants (eg buffel grass and pasture legumes) are present in many environments.
3. Much of the dense scrubs and forests in areas of better soil and rainfall have been cleared for timber and to provide home and building sites and farmland.

Old journals, diaries, sketches and photographs can attest to the fact that there were fewer trees in many grassland areas 100 and more years ago when regular burning was the main vegetation management tool of graziers. With closer settlement, fewer fires, and a relentless campaign in favour of trees, our ancestral grazing lands are under threat. Overgrazing during drought also favours trees, as there is not enough grass to burn the volunteer tree seedlings.

The Eucalypt Invasion

“Unquestionably there are more trees today than ever there were 100 years ago. In this area trees have both thickened in the traditional stands of timber and encroached out onto the grasslands.

“In 2005 I took the Cessna up to 10,000 feet on a very clear day and took photos to compare to Government aerial photography work done in the early 1950’s. It clearly shows a vast increase in the amount of timber on this property in fifty years.

“We have a lot of photos of timber encroachment detailing how it occurs.”

A direct quote dated March 2010 from a sheep & cattle grazier in the Longreach area, Queensland.

Trees, like every other species on earth, are continually giving birth to suckers and seedlings which immediately seek to dominate any unguarded soil space.

Strangely though, in a very lop-sided vegetation management policy, most controls are now being directed at allowing still more trees to invade food producing grasslands and open forest. They do not need help – trees relentlessly invade most grasslands if not subject to competition, fire or the axe.



Open Forest after the Fire.
Once eucalypt trees get to this size, they are largely immune to fires.

It is not sustainable for Australia to abandon its rural lands in favour of an inland sea of mature unharvested forests (even if natural bushfires did allow such stupidity.)

Sustainability

“True sustainability means avoiding practices that we know can’t go on forever”.

David F Smith 2009 “Green Myths about Australian Farming” Quadrant 2009/4
<http://www.quadrant.org.au/magazine/issue/2009/4/green-myths-about-australian-farming>

Public policy would be better aimed at removing feral plants (like lantana and groundsel) and feral animals (like cats, foxes and wild dogs) from the very extensive and neglected nationalised parks and reserves.

Indigenous Plants Only?

There are many people who believe that vegetation management should aim to freeze the environment from all change, even return it to some idyllic past state before nasty white settlers wielded their axes and introduced their flocks, herds, improved pastures and fodder trees. They believe that only indigenous plants (and animals) have the right to share this land.

Most of the people with such views are far removed from the grubby business of managing land, vegetation and livestock in order to produce the saleable products and taxable incomes that provide the good life for us all (including the vegetation regulators).

Let's consider what they dream of.

The plants and animals used mainly on their "Wanted Dead or Alive" posters are generally unloved species such as cane toads, prickly pear, harrishia cactus, the rabbit and the fox. But out of sight, at the top of their generally hidden agenda, is the objective to eliminate many other useful or loved plants such as buffel grass and all the other introduced improved pastures, lovely and useful trees such as tipuana and Chinese Elm, and useful well adapted animals such as wild camels and water buffalo.

And why go back just to the time of white settlement? The black settlers also caused vast changes in Australia's vegetation and fauna, and brought the dingo. Why protect the aggressive eucalypts whose tolerance to aboriginal fires allowed them to invade and dominate the Australian bush? Where do we stop?

Life is not a still canvas – it is a moving picture. Anything that stands still is dead or moribund and will be replaced by more vigorous life forms. That is happening everywhere on earth.

We will never eliminate cane toads, lantana, rabbits or buffel grass – get used to it. Every landowner must be allowed to decide how best to manage all plant and animal species on his land. (I am far more concerned about wire grass infestation of our pastures and wild dog attacks on our sheep than I worry about cane toads or Chinese Elm.)

Turning Native Plants from an Asset into a Liability

The current Land Clearing Bans and the policy of slapping Preservation Orders on certain land and favoured plants on private property have had one very perverse result:

All Native Vegetation has become a Liability for Landowners

Some landowners have been driven so far as to decide that they will never plant or allow to grow any native plant. Their logic is impeccable:

“If I plant an exotic plant I can remove it, harvest, prune, propagate or poison it any time I like. But if I allow one of the plants on Big Nanny’s protected list to get established on my land, I will never be allowed to lay a finger on it. So, I make sure the population of native species does not increase.”

If however, there was no legal coercion, any landowner who found he had a rare crow’s foot ash on his property would proudly preserve it to show his grandkids – he may even plant a Bunya Nut or some bottle trees.

And if every landowner had the exclusive right to harvest any tree on his freehold, the tough Ironbarks, the durable Tallow woods, the useful Cyprus pines, the valued Blue gums and the romantic Coolabahs would be seen not as potential liabilities, but as precious resources to be preserved or sustainably managed.

Trees, Grasses and Food

Australia’s main tree species, the eucalypts, produce no food for humans except honey and grubs, and compete strongly for land against all food producing species, especially native grasslands supporting grazing animals. Both black and white settlers have seen the danger posed to their food supply by invasion of eucalypt scrub into productive grasslands.

Obviously every pasture benefits from some trees, and some tree species are more grass and herbivore friendly than others. Every landowner should be free to experiment to find the ideal long term mix.

Most people do not appreciate the enormous food value in our grasses. Without the pastures and seeds from our domesticated and wild grasses, 90% of the human race and most of their livestock would starve. Imagine a world without the natural grasslands and cropland of Australia, Argentina, Africa, America, Asia and Europe. Imagine surviving without wheat, rice, sorghum, rye, barley, oats and all the leguminous companions of grasses – lucerne, medics, siratro, soy beans, lentils and clovers. Picture the animals that rely on the Mitchell grass plains, the spear grass hills, the paddocks of winter oats, the sheds of lucerne hay and the pastures of buffel grass, kangaroo grass, panics, couch, paspalum and the drought resisting purple pigeon.



Grasses and Ruminants on the Treeless Plains, Queensland. (DPI Photo)

Many of the great plains that supported huge herds of wild ruminants and marsupials were once treeless. Encouraging trees to extinguish these grasslands is not sound policy, either environmentally or economically.

It seems fashionable in deep green circles to denigrate man's herds of domestic ruminants. This illogical hatred seems to underlie much of the pressure to replace grassland with forests.

Some people with no practical knowledge of the realities of food production seem to think we can replace the large herds of cattle and sheep in countries like Australia and Argentina with trees that produce no food or with peasant farms producing lettuce, lentils, leeks and pumpkin seeds. The great grassland plains of the world have always been kept open and healthy by fire and by their herds of bison, antelopes, wildebeests, zebra, kangaroos, emus, cattle and sheep. They are seldom suitable for intensive cultivation or market gardening.

One famous economist thinks we can revert to hunting kangaroos instead of raising cattle. No doubt our grasslands can and do support millions of kangaroos. And graziers with 223 rifles would be more efficient hunters than aborigines with spears. But there would be no road trains of weaner kangaroos heading for the feedlots and oat paddocks, no mobs of store kangaroos being sold in the huge Dalby saleyards, no trainloads of fat kangaroos filling the abattoirs in the cities, and no containers of Jap kangaroo heading for Tokyo. Graziers and their local communities could survive well on kangaroos, but many city dwellers would starve.

The current vegetation protection laws, if maintained, will cause the production of beef, wool, leather and mutton to fall. Land values will also fall.



Trees Invading Grasslands, Longreach Area. Photo taken March 2010.

If in addition to this stupidity, the resultant eucalypt forests are protected by law or cannot be harvested profitably, country communities will wither and die.

The once productive properties will produce nothing of value to humans, and many people will sorely miss the food and livelihoods that they currently produce.

A Looming Shortage of Food?

Today's tribes of pampered westerners are part of the first generation in the history of the world that seems determined to destroy their own ability to produce food.

The history of the human race has always been a battle for protein in the face of the continual challenge of natural climate change. Nothing has changed for this generation, except the wildfire spread of a destructive new religion that requires the sacrifice of food producers at the global warming altar.

“Only a foolish horse fights with his feed bag”.

Genghis Khan

Food creation on land needs solar energy, land, carbon dioxide and water. There are concerns about future trends in availability of all four of these food essentials.

Eons ago, long before ancient humans discovered the magic warmth locked in coal, millions of woolly mammoths were snap frozen in the icy wastes of Siberia. They are still being dug out of the ice today. They were killed by natural global cooling.

In the last couple of months, in a mild repeat of this past climate disaster, massive snowstorms have killed millions of domestic animals in Mongolia and China. The capacity to produce and distribute food has been heavily reduced across the top of the world from Northern Europe and Russia to North America. When orange groves in Florida are damaged, Texas gets six snowstorms in a few weeks and 55 ships get stuck in ice in the Baltic Sea, it is clear that natural climate variations could do tremendous damage to the world food supply. It is thus no surprise that the canny Chinese are stockpiling grains.

Solar energy produces all of our food. Those who study the cycles of the sun are once again recording a dramatic reduction in sunspots, similar to those that preceded the Little Ice Age which ended just over a century ago. This may indicate that the frigid conditions which affected the Northern Hemisphere over the last two winters may not be just extreme weather events but may be harbingers of more dramatic natural climate change.

Global warming has never been a cause of starvation for mankind as a whole. But global cooling is a killer. Warmth may at times cause discomfort and some casualties, but ice extinguishes everything in its path. Even in areas not threatened by ice and snow, a shortening of the growing season would cause disruptions to food production.

Australia can feed itself and is a major food supplier to the world – beef, mutton, cereals, sugar, dairy products, pork, chicken, eggs, seafood, nuts, legumes, fruit, vegetables, beer and wine.

However green extremists, supported by foolish politicians, are gnawing at the foundations of Australia's food chain. And the biggest threat today is Global Warming Politics.

Natural cooling has destroyed food in the Northern Hemisphere, and anti-food policies are threatening food bowls in Australia, North America and New Zealand. Maybe the real crisis creeping up on the world is not global warming caused by industry, but global famine caused by nature and magnified by the politics of the deep green alarmists?

“17 million US families were unable to feed themselves at some stage during 2009.”

Report from Reuters
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/11/16/AR2009111601598.html>

Land Sterilisation

Land is an essential ingredient for most food production. All over Australia, uncontrolled regrowth of eucalypt scrub is silently and relentlessly reclaiming our vast grazing lands, the source of the lowest cost beef, mutton and wool in the world. Generations of graziers have created and maintained these grasslands against the ever present threat of capture by woody weeds. Now their hands are tied and their land is being stolen by global warming politics. On many properties, the suffocating scrub will soon pass the tipping point, beyond which grasslands are destroyed and the land is no longer capable of sustaining food production.

Land sterilisation is also occurring via the stealth of Wild Rivers, World Heritage and other lock-away land policies.

Even more food producing land is lost by policies that subsidise people to grow carbon forests in the stupid belief that this will somehow improve the climate by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Trees, grasses, sub-soil critters, grazing animals and carnivores are all part of the same carbon cycle. If one life form gets to monopolise land and carbon resources, it is detrimental to most other life forms.

Some people claim that the carbon forests will only be planted on marginal land and thus will not affect food production. But those in the business of growing carbon credits are like everyone else – they want their credits to grow cheaply and quickly, so the better the soil and the lower the need for water, fertiliser and human attention, the quicker the credits will accrue. As evidence of this, Dr David F Smith* reports “The blue gum plantations in Southern Australia are not on marginal land, but on country suitable for productive grazing, even cropping using newer technology.”

****Dr David F Smith “The Charade of Carbon Pollution”, School of Agriculture and Food Systems, The University of Melbourne.***

Moreover, apart from National Parks and the like, any land capable of growing trees unaided is also capable of supporting grazing stock, and is probably doing so now.

Still more stupid are market-destroying policies that use government mandates and subsidies to convert food producing land to growing ethanol for cars. This has already caused massive dislocations to markets for corn, sugar, soybeans and palm oils in USA and Asia. Using subsidies and market mandates to force the conversion of food into motor fuel is a ludicrous policy that has already caused rising prices and shortages in several food industries.

It has also caused the conversion of natural grasslands and forests into ethanol crop monocultures.

This is a bad result for food production and the environment, and irrelevant for the climate.

The Origins of Government Vegetation Controls

Humans have developed two main food gathering methods – hunt-and-gather or settle-and-farm.

Hunt-and-gather societies were largely too mobile to get sponged on by a class of land controllers and tax collectors. Most members of early human societies were producers, defenders or supporters – warriors, hunters, gatherers, medicine people, story tellers etc. There were no centralised vegetation protection orders and no Land Inspectors. Every tribe could experiment with different methods – fire or no fire, slash and burn, nomadic grazing, early fires or late fires, few big fires or progressive small fires, etc. No one tried to invoke laws to lock up large areas of land to exclude fire or to prevent natural competition for land.

Once farming became a dedicated occupation tied to defined blocks of land, a number of dramatic and largely irreversible changes occurred:

- Farmers, attached to their land and isolated, were taxed, allowing kingdoms, courtiers, professional politicians, standing armies and paid bureaucracies to develop.
- Governments, in the mistaken belief that they knew more about everything than their subjects, felt the need to issue commands to farmers on how to manage the land and vegetation.
- Governments took command of things on a large scale. They could flip-flop from forcing to prohibiting land clearing, embark on massive schemes like brigalow clearing, lock up large areas of land, prohibit vegetation control or dictate land use, etc.
- Governments even tried to run the farms in the comrade societies, but that just produced poverty and starvation.

Freehold vs Leasehold Land Management

Any sustainable land management policy must allow landowners the freedom to experiment with innovative techniques and to take responsibility for the results of their actions.

Many years ago, an Australian farmer/mining engineer, P. A. Yeoman, bought an impoverished, eroded, unproductive farm in NSW. After carefully surveying the land forms and studying water flow and erosion patterns, Yeoman jumped on his dozer and started ripping keylines, building dams, planting new pastures and changing the pattern of surface water flow so that water stayed on his land longer and soaked into the soil. He created his own rich soil and conserved his rainfall on it. Luckily he did not need approvals for any of this work – he just did it.

The results were spectacular. A barren prickly farm became a Garden of Eden. Without any help whatsoever from the hordes of government land busybodies, hundreds of farmers have bought Yeoman's book ("Water for every Farm") and used his Keyline ripping principles to greatly improve their land. When this is combined with retaining or establishing belts of timber along contours or across prevailing winds, the property is vastly improved.

Australia would be a far better place if more farmers were given the secure tenure and freedom to improve their land. And to provide the tools to do this, their incomes should be freed from the dozens of "research levies" which currently support learned advisers and lawyers in air conditioned offices in remote cities.

Another lone maverick land manager, Alan Savory in South Africa, observed that the wild herds of grazing animals maintained their grazing range in far better condition than did the domestic grazing animals penned permanently in fenced paddocks. After close study of both situations he and others who followed have developed 'Holistic Grazing Management' that, as much as possible, mimics the behaviour of wild herds. Savory and others have shown that, contrary to the nonsense promulgated by those who hate cattle, the hard cloven hooves are not a soil destroyer, but managed correctly, can create more and better soil. A short period of very heavy grazing, in which cattle knock down old grass, churn and fertilise the soil and bury new pasture seeds is very beneficial to soil creation and pasture maintenance and restores degraded and eroded watercourses. It heals soil erosion and is precisely the natural treatment needed to encourage a burst of healthy new pasture (providing the grazing animals are taken off to a new paddock or water course to allow plant rejuvenation to occur).

Ruminant hooves only destroy the landscape when they are badly managed, which usually means confining animals for too long on the one paddock of pasture. Fires and migrating ruminants created the weed free and often treeless Prairies of North America and Veldts of Africa. And if "soft footed" animals are so easy on the Australian bush, what about the destruction caused by the rabbit? It is not the foot type that matters, it is the grazing management.

As in the case of Yeoman's Keyline method of soil creation and water conservation, knowledge of Savory's ideas on Management Intensive Grazing has been passed on by farmers and private consultants with no help whatsoever from government advisers and academics trying to manage Australian agriculture by drawing lines on satellite images.

Competition is the best discovery tool. Landowners must be free to explore varying vegetation and grazing systems, and other farmers will quickly learn from both the successes and the failures. When government enforces a "One size fits all" vegetation management policy, it will certainly fail.

Policy flip-flops on a matter as important as the right to control scrub regrowth make a mockery of government claims to be promoting sensible long term land management. For example, for nearly 200 years, land inspectors insisted that landowners clear their annual quota of trees. Now this silly policy has been replaced by one even sillier – landowners may not clear any trees. How can we encourage farmers to be innovative and observant when every little thing is either compulsory or prohibited?

A key factor encouraging good long term land management practices is secure freehold tenure. That allows the owner to take a long term view because the improvements he makes will increase the capital value of his land. A rented house, especially on a short term lease, will seldom be cared for as well as one occupied by the owner. Similarly, in the dying years of a grazing lease with no automatic right of renewal, the lessee has no incentive to maintain long term land productivity. He rapes the land and neglects the infrastructure.

Freehold vs Leasehold

"Give a man an acre of wilderness and he will make a garden out of it.

Lease a man an acre of garden and it will become a wilderness".

Anon. Quoted in "Country Crisis" by Charles Russell, p333.

For many decades, the trend of government policies has been to abolish or weaken the rights of freehold land owners. Even worse, they have increased the risks and uncertainty of both leasehold and freehold land by interfering with freehold rights, shortening lease life, removing automatic renewal rights and allowing many overlapping independent tenures and land rights to be recognised. They have even made a mockery of indigenous land rights by smothering them with Wild Rivers, World Heritage and other land sterilisation policies.

Charles Russell of the pioneering grazing family from Jimbour in Queensland has the last word on the importance of secure land tenure:

"As a result of my experiences in two states (Queensland and New South Wales), I would say that a lessee is ill-advised to improve leasehold land beyond the requirements laid down at the commencement of the lease".

Those who improved their leases lost half of them at renewal time. Those who ran them down were classified as "marginal" and allowed to retain the lot.

Trees, Grasses, Ruminants, Carbon Dioxide and the Carbon Cycle

There are a few urban myths that need dispelling:

- Trees are green, clean and beautiful.
- Grasses (and subsoil life) are irrelevant to humans and the environment.
- Grazing ruminants, especially domesticated ones, are bad, bad, bad.

All life on earth, plus the carbon in the oceans, the atmosphere and the soils, are part of the life-supporting carbon cycle.

The key factor here is the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Without this essential aerial plant food, there would be no plant life on earth and hence no animal life. And the more abundant the carbon dioxide, the more abundant the plants (and all food).

It is an amazing social phenomenon that people can be led to believe that carbon dioxide, the gas of life, is evil and needs to be removed from our atmosphere.

Every time the earth has a natural warming phase, the barren ice sheets melt, sea levels rise, rainfall increases, the oceans expel carbon dioxide, plant life blooms and all animal life thrives. This is a natural self correcting cycle that has occurred on earth many times before. How any one of these effects can be condemned as a dangerous threat to humanity is a testament to the power of the cunning propaganda of Climatism.

Current carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere are well below those that are optimal for plant (and thus animal) life. And there is nothing unnatural about the gases produced by the burning of coal – all of the carbon in coal (and all the other trace elements) were extracted from the atmosphere and soils eons ago. All are beneficial for plant life unless present in suffocating amounts, certainly not the tiny trace amounts presently in our atmosphere.

Coal is another part of the earth's magic carbon cycle. Burning coal merely recycles the carbon back to the atmosphere from whence it came, millions of years ago. It is a bit of serendipity that burning coal adds plant food to the atmosphere, thus contributing to a greener earth.

Carbon dioxide is the breath of life for all food production. It is a suicidal policy to waste real resources, reduce food production capacity and increase energy costs in attempts to reduce the availability of free aerial plant food.

Hopefully for our food capacity, today's silly carbon demonization policies will soon fade away.

The Invasion of Grasslands by Carbon Credit Forests.

The essential beliefs behind the Global Warming Climate Policy Hysteria that drives the restrictive vegetation management policies are:

- The earth is in an abnormal warming phase.
- This warming has been caused almost exclusively by man's production of carbon dioxide produced mainly by the burning of coal and oil.
- If man does not reduce production of carbon dioxide we will face dangerous and destructive global warming.
- There is evidence that the above statements are true and are supported by the vast majority of scientists.
- There are technologies that will allow us to reduce the production of carbon dioxide without damage to our living standards.
- Encouraging the planting of trees will reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.
- We do not need the food produced by our grasslands and should remove the grazing ruminants and convert the land into to parks, forests or farms running kangaroos and emus.

Careful assessment of science and evidence suggests that EVERY ONE OF THE ABOVE STATEMENTS IS FALSE, UNPROVEN and/or TOTALLY IMPRACTICAL:

- Earth has been as warm as now or warmer during the Roman and Medieval Warm Eras and in other warm phases since the last ice age ended. World temperatures have been stable or falling for over a decade despite big increases in man's production of carbon dioxide.
- The record of the last 100 years shows that there is no consistent correlation between world temperature and carbon dioxide production. Correlation does not prove causation, but lack of correlation does disprove theories of causation.
- There is no evidence that carbon dioxide has been the driver of world temperature. Carbon dioxide has no power to generate heat and its ability to provide a slight barrier to the loss of some surface heat to space is almost exhausted. Whatever Australia does will have an undetectable effect on carbon dioxide content of the atmosphere and world temperature. But some proposed actions to limit recycling of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere will be very damaging to our backbone industries, jobs and the cost of living.

- A large and rapidly growing number of qualified and experienced scientists reject the “carbon dioxide controls temperature” argument. They know that climate is always changing as a result of natural causes and this is likely to continue in the future. They also know that the computer models claimed to predict future climate have never been verified, and do not agree with one another.
- There are no technologies that will allow significant reduction in Australia’s usage of hydro-carbon fuels for cars, trains, ships, airlines and mobile power plants by the target 2020. And the only proven technology that could replace coal and gas for base load electricity generation within the next decade is nuclear. However, considering the political, regulatory and practical obstacles to nuclear power in Australia, this will not occur by 2020. There is also zero chance that carbon geo-sequestration will prove sensible or feasible within that time frame.

It follows inevitably that the only way Australia can reduce its production of carbon dioxide is by closing industries or reducing production.

- Trees are exactly the same as grasses and ruminants in the carbon cycle – completely neutral except in the very short term. They all absorb carbon from the atmosphere (via carbon dioxide) and from humus in soils while they grow, and return it to the biosphere when they die.
- If ruminants are excluded from our grasslands, there are no feasible options to replace the cheap clean foods that our grasslands produce now.

IPCC Promotes a Lie regarding Emissions from Tree Harvesting.

The IPCC has deemed that all carbon in a tree is recycled to the atmosphere **on the day the tree is cut**. This is a lie so blatant that a deeper motive is indicated. The IPCC is not interested in the reality of atmospheric carbon dioxide – their motive is tree preservation at any cost, especially if it is those hated ruminant graziers who have to pay the cost.

I live in an old country homestead at Rosevale in Queensland. This block was selected in 1877, and a slab house, dairy and shed were built soon after. The old dairy was still standing when we bought the farm in 1990. Some slabs from the original buildings still exist, hard and sound, despite being stacked on the ground with no protection from sun, rain and white ants. These are not small slabs and the trees they were split from were probably about one metre in diameter at knee height. Trees of this size must have been at least 50 years old when they were cut. Most of the carbon in the trees was removed from the atmosphere when they were young and vigorous, say in about 1850. So the carbon which was removed from the atmosphere in about 1850 is still sequestered in timber slabs in 2010 – 160 years later. Some of the roots of these old trees still exist, still buried in the ground, over 100 years after the trees were cut.

Trees swept down flooded rivers are sometimes buried in silt, and branches are buried in land fill. Some of this carbon is also denied to the atmosphere for decades.

So the IPCC has promoted a fraud, whose purpose is not related to climate. Its goal is to terminate all clearing or harvesting of timber in any country silly enough to sign a carbon prohibition pledge at one of the recurring climate group therapy meetings in Rio, Kyoto, Bali, Copenhagen or Mexico.

The Howard government did not protest the fraud involved in the IPCC rule on tree clearing. The costs of this mistake then became real liabilities when the Rudd government signed the Kyoto Protocol, and later a unilateral Copenhagen commitment, thus triggering obligations and penalties every time a tree is cut down. How soon before a landowners will be levied a carbon emission tax for bushfires on their land?

Both governments are guilty of negligence.

The Myth regarding Carbon Sequestered by a Mature Forest

There is another myth abroad concerning the ability of mature forests to sequester carbon.

All plants go through three growth phases.

In Phase 1, they grow slowly because the root system is not well developed, and the leaves (the solar energy collectors) do not have enough area to collect the energy to grow quickly.

Once roots and leaves are well developed, and providing there is enough water, the plant grows quickly (Phase 2. Most of the carbon is extracted from the air during this phase.

Once the plant reaches mature size (Phase 3), the plant sets its first seeds. After that, growth slows down considerably, and net removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere may cease as extractions are offset by the decay of rotting branches, bark and leaves. Eventually the tree dies, is struck by lightning, or is blown down.

This process is taking place in every forest. If the forest is unharvested, extraction of carbon dioxide slows down as most of the trees become mature, eventually reaching a steady state where carbon extracted by live trees is offset by carbon released by rotting trees.

However, if the trees are harvested, and the timber used in houses, yards, bridges and fence posts, that process can be repeated as much as five times per century. Even when harvesting losses and roots are allowed for, this means that, if a forest is harvested regularly and the timber used in buildings, the process can remove at least twice as much carbon per year on a sustainable basis, than a protected and never-harvested forest. (This understates the case considerably as a fully mature forest is largely carbon neutral.)

Therefore the near universal condemnation of the timber industry by the global warming industry is without logical foundation. If the goal of the alarmists is removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, all forests should be regularly logged, selecting mature trees suitable for timber production.

The Effect on Property Values of Tree Clearing Bans.

Tree clearing bans prevent landowners from protecting their pastures from invasion or domination by trees and woody weeds. Such laws reduce the ability of the owner of any land tenure, freehold or leasehold, to maintain his production of grass and grazing animals. The bans also increase the risks of damaging bushfires. Their land values are reduced below the level they would otherwise command. This financial effect will be immediate as the market reassesses the lifetime stock carrying capacity of the land.

The governments have in reality confiscated some of the value of the land in order to reduce the liabilities they have accepted under the Kyoto and Copenhagen Agreements to control carbon dioxide emissions.

Compensation must be paid for these damages.

There are two aspects to the damages:

- The damage and loss of value that has already occurred because of the delays to regrowth clearing. The land has already suffered some loss in carrying capacity.
- The loss which reflects the expectation that these clearing bans will remain in place for an indefinite time, and thus future carrying capacity will be reduced.

Other Losses in Property Value caused by Anticipation of the CPRS

Landowners anticipate being affected in two major ways by the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. These expectations have also reduced property values below what they would have otherwise been:

- The increase in operating costs for transport services, motor fuels, electricity, cement, building materials, fence posts and food. When operating costs are increased, the enterprise value always falls. Some properties will become marginal or unprofitable.
- The threat of having to pay for emissions produced by farm animals, particularly cattle and sheep.

The best way for the Senate to solve this potential problem is to ensure that the dishonestly named Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme does not become law.

The Enquiry has also asked for comments on the policy of the Coalition parties.

Their opposition to the CPRS is commendable and welcome. But they have done nothing yet to remove policies that provide special subsidies and market guarantees to the global warming industry. These discriminatory favours force feed bio-fuel farms and factories, promote carbon credit forests and provide guarantees for alternative energy speculators and entrepreneurs. Many landowners will be damaged by these policies.

What is the Appropriate Compensation?

Two actions are strongly recommended to compensate landowners for the damages caused by the vegetation clearing bans:

- Abolish all vegetation controls on freehold property. This will remove the cause of the damage to land value caused by fear of future losses in carrying capacity.
- Pay cash compensation for the damage caused by the delay in carrying out regrowth control. This will have reduced the stock carrying capacity for the time the bans were in place.

There is no easy way to calculate these losses – they will vary from property to property, depending on the type and state of the vegetation, the use of the land, and chance factors like bushfires.

Destruction of value is easy – all it takes is the simple stroke of a legislator's pen. Measuring the extent of the loss suffered by each individual property owner can only be done by land valuers on a case by case basis. No matter how it is done, there will be unusual cases and any settlement will cause some injustice and attract some fraudulent claims. And the costs of courts, lawyers and valuers could easily exceed the compensation that eventually trickles down to the landowner.

An additional complication for lawyers is: Who caused the damage and who is liable to pay? Our understanding of the matter is that the Commonwealth initiated the vegetation clearing bans, but to evade the Constitutional prohibition on acquiring property without just compensation, they used state powers to give legal teeth to the bans.

So the State people who directly caused the damage are not bound by any “fair compensation” provisions in the Commonwealth Constitution. And the Commonwealth has probably taken legal advice to ensure that it cannot be proved that they have acquired property on unjust terms. This was a messy underhand deal all round, verging on a conspiracy to commit an unconstitutional crime against Australian landowners.

There is an urgent need for constitutional amendments to prevent the Commonwealth from evading the Australian Constitution in this devious way. The states should also have such a curb on their freedom to seize property rights without compensation.

Here is a suggestion for determining the amount of a compensation settlement which is reasonably practical and has some justice:

- The Commonwealth must have estimates on the annual tonnage of emissions they expected to prevent by putting these vegetation clearing bans in place. The Commonwealth should be required to table those estimates in the Senate.
- The Commonwealth must also have estimates on the cash benefits of these savings per tonne of CO2 equivalent under the Kyoto Protocol. It should be required to table these.

- Whatever benefits the Commonwealth has acquired to date have been seized from landowners without payment of compensation. Therefore the Commonwealth should be required to pay this amount to eligible landowners. It should be paid, in cash and non-taxable, as soon as possible. It should be handled in the same way as cash stimulation packages were paid to selected individuals.

Which Landowners are Eligible to Receive Compensation?

The vegetation clearing bans have obviously reduced the value of those grazing properties with significant areas of uncleared or regrowth vegetation. These areas are sterilised.

But the same argument applies to cropping land – the timbered areas, which previously were possible cropland, are now unavailable.

Even small landowners will see their property worth less if future owners are banned from removing unwanted vegetation that has appeared or may appear on their land. Much of the recent bushfire danger could have been removed if landowners had been allowed to clear bush encroaching close to their homes. These bans have proved fatal for some landowners. The regrowth is also exposing larger properties to more dangerous bushfires.

Even cleared blocks are affected – in certain areas classified as “remnant vegetation” landowners are prevented from using machinery or removing any tree seedlings that appear.

All of the above drives the conclusion that the fairest solution is to pay tax free compensation to all landowners in affected areas at a set date, providing they hold 40 acres or more of land and are recognised by the tax department as carrying out a farming business.

The total package should be divided among landowners in proportion to the unimproved value of the land at the date of imposition of the vegetation bans. These figures are also available.

The above procedure, though not perfect, has the following advantages:

- It does not require individual valuations for every property in the states affected.
- Massive class action suits and the resultant huge legal costs may be avoided.
- All figures required for the calculations should be available without needing tricky new calculations.
- Landowners decide what to do with the money so there is no sudden force feeding of favoured industries as we have seen in the roof insulation scheme. And there is no requirement for governments to manage any physical actions.
- The payment has a just basis, and politically is no different from the stimulus packages already paid.

The Perverse Consequences of Drought Relief Policies

Every government seeks to harvest votes by promising to save landowners from every natural disaster. Naturally this policy results in the bulk of the relief going to people who misread the risks and realities of their personal or business decisions.

Drought affects every landowner and business in a droughted area, but often only the marginal farmers get government assistance. This tends to increase the number of marginal farmers and discourages people who took drought precautions. It also puts more pressure on the vegetation and the environment as landowners overstock in good times assuming that government will be there if their high risk decisions backfire.

“Drought” is mainly a problem to people who are overstocked for the conditions at the time. The old timers knew how to insure against it:

“Sell stock, reduce debt and keep the hayshed full”.

If politicians believe that drought has so damaged an area that assistance is required, the fairest welfare scheme would be to use state or federal support to eliminate some or all local government rates and land taxes for all businesses in the affected area for a specified time. This helps all businesses without rewarding only the marginal operators.

The same comments apply to “flood relief”. One of the most sensible comments on this subject was made by Al Grassby many years ago to people with houses on flood plains:

“Flood plains are for floods”.

Everyone is free to choose where to live or conduct business. Those who choose to live in places liable to suffer drought, bush fire, tsunami, beach erosion or floods should be totally free to tailor their business, their land, their houses and their insurance to best cope with their environment. Those who choose to own assets in high risk areas will benefit from a lower purchase price for such assets. Or they will gain the enjoyment of a beach front location. They should be free to take those risks in order to gain those benefits providing they also accept all the consequences of their actions. Should things go wrong, they should not assume they have an automatic right to bailouts by taxpayers.

None of this is to suggest that victims of exceptional drought and flood do not deserve help. It is to say that people should not be entitled to an automatic government bailout. Any government help should go to every landowner in the affected area via tax holidays or rate refunds, or targeted at restoring or improving community infrastructure such as roads, levee banks, power, communications, water supplies and bridges, not just spent on high risk farmers or homeowners.

Individuals, neighbours and businesses are very generous with practical and financial help in terrible times, and these are best publicised and co-ordinated by trusted local volunteers in the media and the community. Such people know better than distant law-makers who is in most need. And the administration costs are lower.

Conclusions and Recommendations.

- 1. The global warming case for maintaining the vegetation clearing bans has collapsed and the bans should be removed immediately. The Senate should move to abolish all vegetation controls for all freehold land, and restrict leasehold vegetation controls to no more than those specified in the original lease conditions.*

Discussion: The blanket bans on clearing native vegetation have damaged Australian landowners and if maintained will cause substantial damage to Australia's ability to produce food from its grasslands and open forests.

These bans were introduced on the pretext that man's production of carbon dioxide is causing dangerous global warming. There was never any evidence in support of this belief – just manipulated data and computer programs which have never successfully predicted the climate even a mere decade ahead, let alone a century into the future (the Met office has trouble forecasting anything beyond 10 days). The case for man-made global warming has collapsed.

- 2. Repeal all legislation designed to tip the balance in favour of native plants or trees. Controlling real "weeds" is a sensible and worthwhile exercise – attacking useful or harmless exotic plants or animals, just because they are "exotic", should cease.*

The Government should focus its environmental enthusiasm on the vast tracts of government land (Nationalised Parks, Reserves, Heritage and Wilderness Areas etc). In these areas, land managers should adopt sensible land management policies such as regular burn-offs, and control of noxious weeds and feral pests on their land. If they cannot do this, the land should be sold to those prepared to care for it better.

Discussion: There is no environmental imperative to maintain these bans. The Australian landscape is always changing and in many grassland areas, there are more trees and regrowth scrub now than there were when aboriginals and white squatters burnt the grasslands regularly. The major tree losses have occurred in the forests along the coast, which have been cleared for timber, farming, roads and cities. These areas are largely unaffected by the tree clearing bans. But with closer settlement in rural areas, and the growth of a lop-sided love affair with trees, trees are invading and occupying more grasslands. Plants and animals are always becoming extinct, and thousands have done so long before cattle grazed on Australian grasses. It is a futile crusade to attempt to turn back the clock and remove all "exotic" life from Australia.

There is no difference between trees, grasses and grazing animals in the matter of carbon recycling. All extract carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as they grow and give it back when their dead bodies decompose.

3. If the goal is to sequester carbon dioxide in trees, forests that are regularly harvested will continuously sequester at least twice as much carbon as mature forests. Therefore if carbon sequestration is the goal, the timber industry should be encouraged by making more state forests open to selective logging and harvesting.

Discussion: There is no difference in the carbon cycle for a tree, a cow or a clump of grass. Each consumes carbon dioxide quickly as it grows, then slowly as the individual matures until, near the end of its life, carbon extracted from the air equals recycled carbon. Then as the dead body rots, all carbon is recycled to the soil or the air. So, unless harvested, a mature paddock of grass, or a forest of trees, or a herd of old cows all perform similarly in the carbon cycle – they are neutral. There is no reason to choose one over the other as far as the carbon cycle is concerned.

But if any of them is harvested regularly, in a way that preserves their bodies, carbon can be sequestered continuously from the atmosphere. So every timber post, every woollen jumper, every leather lounge and every tin of bully beef should earn a carbon credit.

The conclusion is inescapable: Harvesting a forest for timber will remove and store more carbon dioxide than will preserving mature unlogged forest.

4. Introduce Federal and/or State reforms to prevent the Commonwealth and States from using state powers in a devious way to acquire private property rights without paying compensation.

Discussion: Enforcing tree clearing bans has allowed Australian governments to steal possible carbon credits from landowners without paying compensation. This was achieved in an underhand fashion by getting the states to enforce the bans on behalf of the Commonwealth, thus evading the Commonwealth Constitutional Ban on seizing property without just compensation. The governments got the potential assets but the landowners were left with the real liabilities.

5. If the bans are not repealed immediately, all Australian landowners affected by the bans should receive lump sum compensation equal to the value of the carbon credits already claimed or calculated by the Australian Government. This package of funds should be allocated to all landowners carrying out a business on their land in proportion to the unimproved value of the land.

Discussion: As the Roof Insulation Fiasco has shown, once a government elephant charges into a small private industry, there is so much damage and dislocation that, when the elephant eventually leaves, things can never be put back together with justice to all. The best that can be done is to find some practical method that achieves a reasonable measure of justice without employing two armies of barristers and lawyers.

6. The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, were it enacted, will do great damage to all Landowners by way of cost increases for transport, motor fuels, electricity, cement, building materials and food, and it will have no beneficial effects on climate. The Senate should totally reject this bill.

Discussion: This devious bill is not about carbon or pollution. Its aim is to reduce the recycling of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. There are no climate or environmental benefits in that but it will cause massive damage to Australian industries and jobs.

In reality is an underhand attempt to so hobble our carbon based economy with rationing and taxes that the costly and unreliable alternate energy schemes that have failed in so many countries can appear to be able to compete successfully with electricity from coal or gas.

7. This investigation has uncovered some subsidiary but related matters that warrant the Senate's attention:

7.1. Make it easy for all landowners to adjust the location of boundaries by mutual agreement with their neighbours. This will improve the ability of landowner to better manage their land, waterways, vegetation and soils.

7.2. Reform drought management policies so that they provide relief for all businesses in the droughted area, not just the marginal farmers.

7.3. Improve security of land tenures by strengthening freehold rights, encouraging the conversion of leasehold to freehold, and minimising overlapping tenures.

Further Participation

The Carbon Sense Coalition is happy to appear before the Senate Standing Committee to answer questions, provide explanations or produce more evidence for any of the claims made in this Submission.

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The Carbon Sense Coalition is an Australian based organisation which opposes waste of resources, opposes pollution, and promotes the rational and sustainable use of carbon energy and carbon food.

This submission was prepared by Viv Forbes with assistance from several other members of the Carbon Sense Coalition on their own initiative with no inducements or policy directions from any other groups. Many Coalition members are tax payers, shareholders, employees and consumers in interests likely to be affected by the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, and the related Vegetation Control Legislation and bans.

Disclosures about the Author:

Viv Forbes is a fifth generation Australian and his ancestors were farmers, timber getters, cheese makers and bullock drivers. He has spent much of his life living and working in rural Australia. He has a degree in Applied Science Geology from the University of Queensland, and post graduate training in Investment Analysis, Soil Science, Pasture Management and Economics. He has extensive experience in the exploration, mining, investment and grazing industries and has also been an employee of the Queensland Government. He is currently a non-executive director and shareholder of a small coal exploration company and, with his wife Judy, owns and lives on a cattle and sheep grazing property at Rosevale in Queensland, Australia. Their property is open forest and cleared grassland and is not strongly affected by the ban on tree clearing.