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Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees
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Submission - Commonwealth procurement procedures – paper procurement - inquiry

EEG has an interest in this investigation from an environmental perspective, but given the recent issues surrounding steel manufacturing in Australia, not to mention past industries which have collapsed (footwear, clothing, cars, and so on) it is timely to also include comments from this angle.

We understand the push by certain businesses to have governments adopt policies of buying Australian only and supporting local industries. We support Australian made but only if the product does not come at a great environmental cost. We would like serious consideration of a procurement policy which also aims to purchase products or services which have minimal environmental impact. This should override any criteria that supports locally made.

Copy paper made in Australia cannot claim to be environmentally friendly given that Australian Paper is responsible for logging the habitat of the federally listed Leadbeaters Possum, recently upgraded to Critically Endangered. 'Australian made' should not always be the principle criteria used to decide purchasing decisions.

If a procurement policy was adopted for one product or industry, how would the government decide which of the hundreds of struggling enterprises and local industries should also be favoured? It would open the floodgate for many local industries that are unable to compete with imports, to also demand the govt alter its procurement policies to support them as well.

AP has made a loss 4 years running. EEG believes there are larger systemic issues which cannot be solved by the government buying from AP. The public is

also increasingly choosing paper based on price or/and sustainability - not country of origin.

With free trade agreements now in place, we question whether procurement policies would contravene these agreements – which by the way, EEG is not in favour of for many reasons including that they force all members to drop standards to the lowest possible, including environmental and human rights.

Jill Redwood
Coordinator

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