

S U B M I S S I O N

to

THE SENATE FINANCE & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFERENCE
COMMITTEE

on

NATIVE VEGETATION LAWS, GREENHOUSE GAS ABATEMENT AND CLIMATE
CHANGE MATTERS.

The subject addressed is clouded by the absence of photographic evidence of Australia when first white settlement occurred over 200 years ago; and by the lack of knowledge of ecology by the wider electorate.

Accordingly the attached "REVIEW OF EVIDENCE ON DRYLANDS PASTORAL SYSTEMS AND CLIMATE CHANGE - implications and opportunities for mitigation and adaptation" Paper No.8 issued by the Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome, 2009, should be studied by the Committee. It is supported by six pages of scientific references.

The impact of Vegetation Management Legislation is distorted by:-

(i) Legislators who respond to conservationists and Green Lobbyists - ignoring the fact that "REGROWTH" (native tree regeneration) is often very dense - unlike the open bushland with its lush perennial grass understorey described by the early explorers and settlers. (Refer John Longstaff's "Gippsland, Sunday Night, February 20th, 1898" in Melbourne Art Gallery, and comparison of burnt-out tree REGROWTH on Black Saturday. Copies from "The Weekend Australian" attached to my Submission to the Victorian Bush Fire Committee enclosed.)

(ii) Landholders who do not recognise that "freehold title" or "Fee Simple" is freedom from paying rent to the Crown, NOT freedom to use the land (the National Estate) at will.

and
Landholders who do not recognise the diminution in value of land degraded since the 1850s by "land management" associated with tree-clearing, altered fire regimes, and set-stock, fenced grazing animals has characterised significant changes in once virgin grassed bushlands.

and
Landholders who do not recognise that mechanical cultivation of cleared land together with use of artificial fertilizers and chemicals has destroyed the organic matter (carbon content), moisture-holding capacity and biota in soils of this ancient land - fertility built up over many millenia of Aboriginal custodianship.

(iii) Urban Dwellers to-day have little contact with the land, little knowledge of how their food and fibre is produced nor do they equate the money supply with production. Yet we cannot transport goods on the internet nor eat Micro-chips!

1. IMPACT OF NATIVE VEGETATION LAWS AND LEGISLATED GREENHOUSE ABATEMENT MEASURES ON LANDHOLDERS.

(a) Any Diminution of Land Asset Value and Productivity as a result of such laws:-

In the Weekend Australian 4/10/08, Professor R. Garnaut said "Biosequestration - taking carbon out of the atmosphere and burying it in the soil is potentially Australia's most important contribution to the global effort to reduce greenhouse gases.

and
It is a possible disadvantage that reforestation will soak up a lot of increasingly scarce water."

In "Landline" on 11/2/2007, Professor Tim Flannery stated "One of the great opportunities in Australia is sequestering or storing carbon in the soil. There are an number of ways that this can be done; but essentially it's all to do with good management of the soil. The broad figures are that we can store enough carbon in the living biosphere to offset all the carbon emissions since the beginning of the industrial revolution."

In the C.S.I.R.O. Sustainable Agriculture National Flagship Supplement in Queensland Country Life on 26/11/2009, Dr. Jeffery Baldock, C.S.I.R.O. Land & Water, Adelaide said "a program to define the amount of soil carbon present in soil will use a technique developed by C.S.I.R.O. using mid-infrared (MIR) spectroscopy".

In the 2009 Food & Agriculture Organization of the UNITED NATIONS Land & Water Discussion Paper No.8 the Review highlights the significant untapped potential for climate change mitigation and adaptation associated with improved management of grazing lands in pastoral and agropastoral systems, not only for their large extent, widespread degradation and limited resilience to drought and desertification, but also for their potential capacity to sequester and store carbon in soils.".....

"The Review also highlights the multiple benefits of enhancing ecosystem services and processes for improving livelihoods while contributing to adaptation to climate change impacts."

In a 2007 Report published by Queensland Country Life, Australia's 251,881 farmers in 1970 had a nett income of \$1.05b. and a total debt of \$2.08b. By 2007 (after substitution of Cost of Living Index by the C.P.I. - based on inclusion of luxuries and % increments - farm debt had risen to about \$43b; 2/3rds of farmers had lost their farms; average age of farmers was escalating; and suicide rate was 1 farmer every 4 days.

From the above quotations, it is obvious that ANY DIMINUTION OF LAND ASSET VALUE AND PRODUCTIVITY AS A RESULT OF SUCH LAWS will neither enhance ecosystems nor improve livelihoods without interventions that address socio-political and economic barriers such as land tenure constraints and inadequate services for political marginalization of pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in Australia.

(1)(b) Compensation arrangements to landholders resulting from the imposition of such laws.

Compensation arrangements should be provided to landholders by amendment to tenure permitting retention of the land provided it is:-

- i. Thinned to allow sufficient regrowth trees to remain at CSIRO Optimum spacing of 80/100 trees per hectare, and
- ii. The grazing land is husbanded by spell-grazing 3P Perennial Grasses as advocated by CSIRO ("Ecograzing Project) and Meat & Livestock Corporation,

*(3)

which land management would result in increased carrying capacity, mill timber production and allow thinnings marketed for wood pulp or wood chips to be used in bio-fuel production from such lignous cellulose.

In addition, in lieu of monetary compensation, labour from a Green Army of unemployed persons, Aborigines and asylum seekers would provide timber thinning, weed control and fire-breaks - work "in the National Interest" as well as of benefit to landholders stressed for such assistance to enable them to husband the land and sequest carbon in the soil.

Note: I have referred to the following:-

(a) AUSTRALIAN FARM JOURNAL - 1 January 2010:

- P.21-23. Finland Shows how to manage farm woodlots.
- P.24-25. Forestry Equipment for Farmers.
- P.31-33. Cattle graziers seriously involved in Native Forest Silviculture (A.F.G. 2008 National Tree Farmers of the Year).
- P.37-39. Setting the Record Straight about Red Meat's Water Use.
- P.44-47. Portugal Gives Green Light to Pasture Carbon Farming as a recognised offset and Denmark currently exploring the use of its extensive organic soils as carbon sinks.

(b) "National Parks - America's Great IDEA" - D.V.D. recently screened by A.B.C. T.V. Last transmission covered President Roosevelt's "New Deal" Civilian Conservation Corps in depth.

(c) Professor Mitchell, Director of the Centre for Full Employment & Equity at Newcastle University commented on A.B.C. National Radio "Regions, rural and remote centres can create hundreds of jobs - which, when investment becomes stronger - could move them from public to private sectors." He estimated \$9b. annually could provide 560,000 jobs at public-funded minimum wages and allowances.

(1)(c) The appropriateness of the method of calculation in termination of compensation.

No monetary compensation should be made to landholders if their claim is based on clearing and/or cultivation of this fragile ecosystem - the oldest and driest continent.

Instead the compensation should be appropriate as outlined in (1)(b) to insure against climate change, and encourage production and employment.

(1)(d) Any other related matters.

Attention is drawn to the Vostok Ice Cores versus the earth's Temperature for the last 400,000 years ; and also the likely scenario that the temperature has been affected *(4 by sun-spots over that time.

Laws requiring timber regrowth to occur unchecked will not see natural selection reduce the density by the end of this century to provide tall mill logs and wildlife habitats. Meantime they will "soak up a lot of increasingly scarce water"- (Professor Garmaut); provide a dense inflammable canopy with understorey of such weeds of National Importance as Lantana (spread by bird droppings); make control of wild fires and pests difficult; and not permit sufficient light to penetrate to allow 3P perennial productive grasses to grow, provide stock feed, sequest carbon and demand less water than trees.

This Law will result in diminution of asset value and productivity of BOTH Landholders and of the Nation.

I trust Senators will be bi-partisan on this Review.

SUBMISSION BY: