

Rob Youl Consulting Pty Ltd

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Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

I've just read about your committee's work in the latest e-bulletin from Agrifood Skills Australia. I wish you all well.

It occurred to me that an idea I've been promoting, *Green Healer*, for major revegetation of uneconomic farmland and rangeland, would interest the committee for these reasons:

- It launches major greenhouse action at last - let's face it, we've been messing around for years now
- Infrastructure is in place - ready to go - Landcare, revegetation contractors and consultants, national network of catchment management bodies, Queensland EcoFund
- It will bring biodiversity benefits
- It has wide community support, including from conservationists
- Job creation in rural areas will eventuate
- International leadership is still possible, although we're beginning to look pathetic
- Landowners will get a modest income
- There are important Murray-Darling Basin implications
- Tourism will benefit through new, more interesting landscapes
- The concept is applicable in all states
- Finally it is likely to have bipartisan support

Thank you

**Rob Youl**

# Green healer

## Caring for our carbon – a complementary program to CPRS

### *Situation*

- Copenhagen provided world-wide affirmation of the importance of trees for sequestration
- Rudd government needs to reburnish its environmental credentials
- It also needs to trump Tony Abbott

### **How? Easily! Through a streamlined, highly motivating national revegetation program...On the scale of the Hawke government's commitment in 1990...**

- One Billion Trees – to be co-ordinated by Greening Australia
- Decade of Landcare
- Establishment of Landcare Australia

This was a magnificent trio of initiatives that left a great legacy and changed Australia's landscapes and land management philosophy!

### **We can mount a new greenhouse/biodiversity program because there are...**

- Thousands of committed landowners (farmers and others) (city-based and rural)
- Millions of hectares of marginal farmland – in all states
- Excellent infrastructure – Landcare networks, contractors, consultants, state departments, municipalities, Landcare Australia (experienced in carbon)

management), other carbon management companies, Greening Australia (experienced in broadacre revegetation), indigenous nurseries, seed collectors, other community groups, CVA (volunteer management), catchment management bodies – **plus the Indigenous community – plus EcoFund Queensland**

- Multi-regional pilot projects – Gondwana Link, Habitat 141, Grow West - and numerous regional ones such as Yarrilinks, Hindmarsh Biolinks, Project Platypus, Holbrook Landcare, Powlett Project, Benalla Regent Honeyeater, and so on
- Widespread commitment to biodiversity – NOTE VICTORIAN BIODIVERSITY WHITE PAPER

And **INDIGENOUS** revegetation is cheap: \$2-3000 per hectare – say \$6000 per hectare for rain forest...

**Australia can lead/educate the world in this arena. No other country has so many forest sinks. We are well ahead. And, through Landcare, which is a superb conduit for knowledge, we have links with Chile, Indonesia, South Africa, Germany, the Philippines.**

**However, we can't rely on the carbon market by itself – government intervention is essential.**

**Why? Because the market, if left to itself, would just plant radiata pine, a ridiculously short-term solution! We want biodiversity and a better landscape besides carbon sequestration. Be even-handed - invest in both Indonesia and Australia.**

### ***Action***

- **Select a very practical, facilitated working party – put it on a wartime footing – give it one month to formulate a plan – by 1 March 2010**
- **Form an Australian Greenhouse Revegetation Corporation to...**
  - **Manage in a devolved manner revegetation projects across Australia**
  - **Reinvest carbon income in more projects**
  - **Pass over benefits to landowners as appropriate**

- Maximise tax benefits
  - Facilitate research of all kinds, including operational technology
- Budget of \$100 million over three years – set goals
- Pilot projects every state
- Develop and launch role for corporations
- Examine a range of options
  - Part of the CPRS – why not rush through as special legislation?
  - Landcare Australia ‘Pay as you Sow’ model
  - Other corporate models
  - Dollar-for-dollar subsidies for certain types of investments
  - Philanthropic involvement
  - Direct community investment
  - Agroforestry/bioenergy opportunities
- Remove barriers
  - Planning
  - Tax – generally good as it is
  - Community concern
- Each site to be surveyed quickly for Indigenous and European cultural heritage
- Early decision to mobilise helps:

- Seed collection
  - Contractors
  - Nursery commitment
  - Sign up landowners – thousands of hectares already on the books
  - Training
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- Connect with major biolinks (note Victorian BWP commitment to this concept)

**In effect, form a national version of Queensland's EcoFund...  
and create hundreds of Green Jobs!**

**Start in 2010, and the credits will commence in 2013! Delay,  
think, analyse, prevaricate – then Australia wastes yet another  
year!**

**Goal: a \$100 million government investment would yield 20  
000 hectares and leverage a further 20 000 hectares of new  
bushland.**

**Rob Youl**