

Ray Hall

To  
The Secretary  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Committee

**Subject: Rural Skills Training and Research**

I wish to provide a brief submission to this committee.

It has been proven in the Top End of the Northern Territory that Indigenous people are far more likely to engage in the workforce under the following conditions –

- They are able to work with native species
- They undertake activities that remove the barriers that a western education places in front of most job opportunities
- They are involved in the active use and management of their land and resources
- They are achieving quadruple bottom line outcomes – environmental, economic, social and cultural

In general the commercialization of native species has a great deal to offer the environmental, social, and economic health of this nation as a whole. The role of Government in this emerging and potentially valuable industry is generally to place barriers up to prevent its development rather than encouragement and assistance.

I am not suggesting the entire agricultural industry adopt such practices but the need to allow rural and remote Australians to diversify and regain strong rural economies requires new and evolving attitudes and ideas. The benefits of such activities provide far more than just economic outcomes.

It would be revolutionary to see the Australian Government turn the tide on the promotion of exotic agriculture and start thinking Australian. Significant acceptance, research and extension would be a good start.

Thank you

Ray Hall