

7 July 2000

Mr. Ian Dundas
Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage
Parliament of Australia

Dear Mr Dundas,

Re: Inquiry into public good conservation- Impact of environmental measures imposed on landholders.

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) welcomes the opportunity to present its perspective to the Standing Committee on Environment & Heritage.

The VFF has always encouraged members to conserve native vegetation and the broader natural resources under their management, as the founder of Landcare clearly indicates.

However the VFF is gravely concerned at the lack of political will to duly compensate farmers for the costs they incur due to conservation, which is of public benefit. The VFF is particularly concerned with the misuse of the Victorian Flora & Fauna Guarantee Act (F&FG) and the Planning and Environment Act.

The VFF worked very hard for landholders who had retained some rare and threatened species on their property be duly compensated when species protection eliminates use of the land for income generation. This was enacted through the F&FG Act. However the enactment of the Planning & Environment Act largely overrides the FFG Act the opportunity for due compensation has been lost.

The VFF also has some serious concerns regarding the complexity of the application process of the annual Natural Heritage Trust funds and the lack of transparency in the approval process. The VFF would like to encourage a new, more accessible, market based incentive scheme to be developed for natural resource management.

The VFF Land Management committee would appreciate an opportunity to present and discuss these issues and others in detail at a public hearing date suitable to your committee.

We look forward to progressing these issues with you.

Yours sincerely

Kate Lockhart

Kate Lockhart
Executive Officer
Land Management