

NATIONAL FARM FORESTRY ROUNDTABLE

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Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
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Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: SUBMISSION TO:
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 'INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC GOOD
CONSERVATION – IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES IMPOSED ON
LANDHOLDERS'**

The National Farm Forestry Roundtable would like to lodge a submission to the 'Inquiry into Public Good Conservation – Impact of Environmental Measures Imposed on Landholders', as follows.

First, it is essential that the equity objective, whereby costs incurred, particularly by landholders, in implementing public good conservation measures, are shared equitably by all members of the Australian community. That is, where costs are imposed on some so that benefits are delivered to all, then all should share in paying the cost plus a management fee to those who produce the benefits. Achievement of this objective in an agreed manner, will ensure that landholders are rightly, logically and willingly the custodians of the land in perpetuity.

Second, there are two streams of benefits which result from conservation measures adopted by landholders: commercial (increased agricultural productivity of the land, and sale of forestry products) and environmental. To ensure the required level of investment to achieve the necessary scale of environmental benefits a change of mindset is required so that those environmental benefits delivered offsite/off-farm are identified, valued and "sold" on a fee-for-service basis to those who benefit, including the Australian community. This will require policy development based on sound R&D required to identify and develop large scale, commercial industry options for landholders. These must be designed to deliver simultaneously the necessary environmental benefits to the Australian community.

Apropos this, the Roundtable has a vision of seeing the day when the typical Australian farm business has farm forestry as one of its mainstream enterprises - an enterprise which enables increased productivity for complementary agricultural enterprises, as well as offering much needed additional cash flow and income diversification for the farmer. Simultaneously, farm forestry has the potential to boost regional economies significantly and provide an essential and lasting frontline vehicle for addressing widespread environmental degradation.

Third, in regard to devising and implementing the required landholder actions, the path for achieving the above objective can be condensed down to 2 broad alternative options:

(1) Punishment Based Motivational System

- That is, a system of command and control
 - This system is not the preferred option because it:
 - Requires constant supervision to ensure compliance
 - Alienates those being motivated
 - Focuses attention on what is wrong rather than what is right, and
 - Channels human creativity into circumventing rules and avoiding punishment
- (2) Reward Based Motivational Systems
- That is, a system of individual choice in the common good
 - This system is the preferred option because it:
 - Requires less supervision to ensure compliance
 - Fosters cooperation
 - Focuses on what is right, and
 - Promotes innovation and creativity in pursuit of the overall objective

Please find attached (see Annex 1) a short profile of the Roundtable. I have also enclosed two copies of the Roundtable's brochure.

We look forward to your consideration of our Submission.

Yours sincerely

Angus Pollock
Chair, National Farm Forestry Roundtable

Annex 1

BRIEF PROFILE The National Farm Forestry Roundtable

1. ROUNDTABLE ORIGIN

- The Commonwealth Government's December 1995 WAPIS ('Wood and Paper Industry Strategy') report included a commitment to: "provide support to establish a National Farm Forestry Roundtable, to provide an Australia-wide forum on farm forestry"

2. ESTABLISHMENT AND REPORTING

- The Roundtable was established by the then Commonwealth Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, in 1998
- The Roundtable reports directly to the Commonwealth Minister (Minister for Forestry and Conservation)

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE - SUMMARY

- Facilitate collaboration amongst stakeholders
- Provide better access to information
- Identify issues and constraints
- Provide advice and feedback
- Examine specific issues referred to it by the Minister

4. ROUNDTABLE SCOPE

- A seamless spectrum of (with emphasis in areas where there are gaps):
- Plantations
- Agroforestry
- Private native forests

5. ROUNDTABLE MEMBERSHIP

- The Roundtable has 13 members, from around Australia (at least 1 from each State)
- Roundtable members chosen for their expertise (not as representatives of any organisations)
- 1 member chosen for non farm forestry farming expertise

6. ROUNDTABLE GOAL

- *To foster the profitable and sustainable development of farm forestry in Australia (covering plantation and private native forestry on farm land)*

7. ROUNDTABLE ROLE

- The independent, national thinktank for farm forestry in Australia
- Operates at the national level
- Complements and builds on the activities of others