



HYDRO MASTA

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4th May 2009

Ms Susan Cardell
Inquiry Secretary
Standing Committee on Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Affairs
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

RECEIVED
13 MAY 2009
BY: AT SIA

Dear Ms Cardell,

We have been requested by Severina Chirumbolo, executive assistant to Richard Marles M.P., to send the enclosed information package to you outlining our company's activities with hydroponic food growing in schools as well as our association with Tagia College in the Torres Strait.

Growing food without soil is a rapidly expanding sector in Australian commercial agriculture, what is not widely understood is that it can also be done successfully on a smaller scale with relatively simple technology. There is however a certain level of technical knowledge and training required to grow hydroponically, which is ideally suited to programmes currently being adopted in both primary and secondary schools.

For example, I have just returned from a trip to Thursday Island after doing a presentation for Don Anderson (head principal) and his team at Tagia College. The presentation covered the prospect of introducing hydroponic food technology into the Torres Strait school system. Don approached my company after visiting our web site www.hydromasta.com.au and found that we were already doing similar projects in Sydney and country N.S.W schools, with two new schools about to commence programmes this term in Balaclava South Australia and Charters Towers Queensland.

Don has asked me to put together a quote to supply the equipment as well as ongoing training and support. All 17 campuses at Tagia College will benefit from the program, with each receiving a hydroponic system so that they can grow a range of salad greens, fruits and vegetables. The produce grown will be consumed via their respective tuck shops or through direct sales to parents and teachers. Once funding has been approved Don and his team plan to roll out the programme in July of this year.

Currently, with assistance from Aus Aid and the French Government, our company has been selected to provide equipment and expertise in the Pacific island community of Futuna. This will be a 2000 plant hydroponic lettuce and salad green system. This will provide fresh healthy produce at the communities' doorstep on an ongoing basis. You will soon be able to view the installation and ongoing progress of this project via our web site.

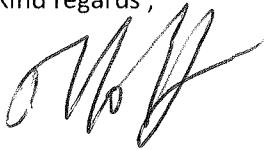
In addition to the above we are working closely with Jim Best, Chairman of the Billabong Aboriginal Corporation, who plans to provide an educational programme similar to Tagia college whereby under privileged teens can learn skills that they may not have access to normally. We will be providing hydroponic systems where they can learn new skills by growing lettuce, strawberries and tomatoes at their site in Canberra. Again, with a view to making the project a self funding revenue raiser. The project is currently on hold whilst B.A.C try to acquire a larger site so as to accommodate future growth of the hydroponic project as well as their other programmes.

Our success with introducing hydroponic food growing in mainland schools could easily be scaled up to support other indigenous communities in Australia and the Pacific, leading to a self supporting commercial enterprise, particularly given the relatively high cost of store bought food in their respective regions. Establishing hydroponic food production at the school level first will both prove the viability and acquaint the community with the benefits of fresh, locally produced food.

Examples can be provided of the many successful hydroponic food production programmes we have installed in schools; Moree Christian School and Frenshman Girls High school are just two of these.

I hope you find the information enclosed useful to the Committee's endeavours to improve food quality and continuity of supply in remote parts of Australia.

Kind regards ,



Trevor Holt,
Hydro Masta Pty Ltd