

The Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Rural  
And Regional Affairs and Transport  
Po Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT 2600

10 August 2008

Dear Madam/Sir

Re: Inquiry into NRM and Conservation Challenges

As President of a small Landcare group, Ashbourne Landcare, I wish to say that over the past ten years we have received small grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$3000 from the North Central CMA Second Generation Landcare Grants, to assist landholders in the removal of their gorse/furze, which is a regional weed. We have had five target areas which have been inspected by members of the Ballarat Task Force or the DPI and land management plans issued where necessary. Landholders are encouraged to request financial help from the Landcare Group of 50 per cent of their costs. The grants have been very successful in encouraging landholders to participate willingly in the programs. The whole of Ashbourne only includes a few thousand hectares yet it has a significant gorse infestation which, being tackled in stages, is steadily being cleared. Managing the project in stages has been far easier for the Landcare group and the various inspectors than managing one large target area with a larger amount of money.

The Caring for our Country program aims to propose large projects which would be inappropriate for small Landcare Groups such as ours and we would be unable to continue our work.

Yours sincerely

Jane Holth