

- Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport PO Box 6100 Parliament House. Canberra ACT. 2600

Dear Secretary,

As a member of the Arawata Landcare Group, and one of the groups represented by the South Gippsland Landcare Network I was extremely worried about the lack of funding Landcare is experiencing at the moment. Federal Government funded projects which we have been implimenting in the last 13 years of protection and preservation of the environment around our gullies, streams and remenant vegetation ,is vital for the sustainability of the farming environment of not only south gippsland but the rest of australia as well.

In the long term approach to natural resource management, we will need funding at a Federal and State level for long term projects, and as an approach to Carbon management stratagies we are in the perfect position for working closely with government departments for large scale projects and on ground works.

Therefore it is vitally important you support a network which is available for a coordinated approach to problems,for planning and communicating a strategic plan to the large base of the farming community, which are our members.

Communities need to be able to understand how processes deliver outcomes and how to influence desirable results.Our own farming practices and landscape will change significantly due to impacts of climate change and we must ensure that landcare is aware and contributing to the White Paper discussion.

Long term projects across our region will need longterm funding and our capacity to deliver has been severely limited due to the lag time between The Natural Heritage Trust funding ceasing in June 2008 and The Caring for our Country Applications closing late July and we do not know when we will be successful, this will give us a waiting time of 3 months or more.This has resulted in the loss of key staff from the region. I think we have a vital role to play in the future, and support to maintain a strong base would be in the best interests of the government

Thank you for your time and attention,

Dawn Marotti, Arawata Landcare Group.11/08/08