

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

INQUIRY INTO STREAMLINING ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION, 'GREEN TAPE' AND ONE STOP SHOPS

**Environmental Farmers Network (EFN) supplementary submission
following original submission of 10 April 2014, and
EFN attendance at public hearing of 2 May 2014**

Environmental regulations can be a very effective tool to help meet conservation objectives. If the objectives have changed or been forgotten, old regulations may in some instances, lose their effectiveness. Also, regulations work best when they are associated with appropriate, complementary incentives. If your committee is going to cull regulations please make sure that they are not those which are to achieve tangible conservation goals and are supported by community. These should stay in place, be enforced and be respected by industry.

Environmental regulations imposed upon the community and business from three levels of government can be a confusing and daunting obstacle to carry out developmental work in agriculture, other business and mining. However, federal regulations have often been effectively used to achieve favourable environmental outcomes where local and state governments have failed.

Having a one-stop shop is a sensible idea, but would have some tricky complexities to deal with if it is to be a success. Some that I can think of are:

- By sub-contracting federal regulations to state bureaucrats the “one stop shop” could effectively eliminate the environmental overseeing role which the federal regulations currently provide. This would especially be the case when regulations at different government levels conflict. It is critical to establish a system which doesn't throw away federal government responsibilities to state interests.
- By having a one stop shop the array of relevant environmental regulations will suddenly become transparent. Some of the regulations will conflict with others. In some areas with high conservation values (such as the South-west Wimmera where I live) this array of regulations will appear to be overwhelming.
 - Who will arbitrate on which regulations will or will not be applied for any given development proposal?
 - Also, on what basis will these decisions be made?
 - Will there be a one stop shop appeal process for those decisions which are challenged?

Once again I would like to thank you for the opportunity to participate in this discussion.

Yours sincerely,
Andrew Bradey,
President, Environmental Farmers Network
13 May 2014