



Our Ref: 250/02/01 PK/
Your Ref:
Ask For: Peter Kulich

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1st September 2011

**Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on
Rural Affairs and Transport
P.O. Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600**

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: Parliamentary Inquiry into Australia's Foreign Investment Review
Board National Interest Test.**

Thank you for the opportunity to have input into the above Inquiry. The Baw Baw Shire is a peri-urban council located just to the east to Melbourne. Whilst being a strong agricultural region, the shire has a strong manufacturing and business support base. It is also one of Victoria's fastest growing municipalities.

Whilst we do not necessarily have existing agri-business entities, or land, that may meet the A\$231million threshold, that threshold may at some time change. We do though have projects that could in the future meet the "foreign government company" aspect particularly in that we are looking to the Middle East & North Africa (MENA) region, Malaysia and China for investment into our region.

We wish to make the following comments to the Committee for consideration:

- That Australian investment into the farming, food and agribusiness sector is limited and at times necessitates the injection of investment funds from overseas;
- That where the proposed investment includes skills and/or technology transfer into Australia that these should be encouraged,
- Where the investment includes vertical integration into food processing in Australia that these should be encouraged,

- Where the investment includes development or expansion of new export markets that these should be encouraged,
- Preference should be made for the overseas company to investigate and seek joint venture partners from within Australia..
- However all investment proposals must be transparent as to ownership of the company making the investment and all its partners and associate companies,
- Strict rules on asset stripping and intellectual property loss (i.e. purchase of an Australian business to gain access to proprietary technology in order to transfer that technology overseas) should be investigated and if possible prevented.

As stated above, given that Baw Baw Shire is encouraging investment from overseas as a way of meeting expansion needs in our food industry and increased employment opportunities for a rapidly growing workforce we do have an interest in this Inquiry.

Yours faithfully

Peter Kulich
Economic Development Co-ordinator