

I would like to take the opportunity to introduce myself to you, my name is Geoff Birchnell and as a 30 year old Chartered Accountant I consider myself to have been fortunate to be associated with the Australian rural industry. Having been raised on a farm I possess a strong desire to continue my association with rural Australia and provide the opportunity for my young family to be association with the land. I am employed in an upper mid-tier accounting; a firm which continues to enjoy a long history of acting for rural families and rural enterprises.

I am fortunate to be in a position of being able to combine my love of agriculture with a profession. As a professional, earning an off farm Income, I am making this submission free from a financial burden, but rather with my root concern in regards to the future of Australian Agriculture.

I write in the hope that you are able to make consideration for the establishment of a framework aimed at assuring a viable agricultural industry for Australia. In my opinion this proposal provides more than a 'subsidy' to current farming families, it supports the future of Australian agriculture and the food security for our nation. I believe that such a framework should start by arresting the rise in operating costs, developing a banking system that provides support for the farming community in times of crisis, limiting the power of the market duopoly and supporting a 'level playing field': in terms foreign government support of agricultural programs. In short I believe that the Australian Federal Government and Australians as a group need to adopt real ownership of Australian Agriculture indeed we need to adopt idealism that Agriculture is a public service.

The future of Australian agriculture is now at a critical point, without drastic changes and the commitment of all available resource there would appear to be little viable future.

It is vitally important that a solution to this situation is reached. The circumstances require a response that is quick and effective. Assistance must be extended to all parties currently battling against real issues affecting Australian agriculture. A framework must also be devised to assist the next generation to take up the pursuit. Only when agriculture reaches a sustainable place will the next generation consider it a viable vocation.

I humbly ask you to consider agriculture as an industry able to provide for and promote Australia into the future.

Geoff Birchnell