

Chapter 1

The terms of the inquiry

Introduction

1.1 On 4 February 2010, the Senate referred to the Finance and Public Administration References Committee for inquiry and report by 30 April 2010:

- (1) The impact of native vegetation laws and legislated greenhouse gas abatement measures on landholders, including:
 - (a) any diminution of land asset value and productivity as a result of such laws;
 - (b) compensation arrangements to landholders resulting from the imposition of such laws;
 - (c) the appropriateness of the method of calculation of asset value in the determination of compensation arrangements; and
 - (d) any other related matter.
- (2) In conducting this inquiry, the committee must also examine the impact of the Government's proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme and the range of measures related to climate change announced by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Abbott) on 2 February 2010.

Conduct of the inquiry

1.2 The inquiry was advertised in *The Australian*, *The Land*, *Weekly Times* and *Country Life* and through the Internet. The committee invited submissions from the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments, interested organisations and individuals.

1.3 The committee received 354 public submissions and 44 confidential submissions. A list of individuals and organisations that made public submissions to the inquiry together with other information authorised for publication is at Appendix 1. The committee held public hearings in Wagga Wagga on 8 April, Rockhampton on 9 April and in Perth on 20 April 2010. Details of the public hearings are referred to in Appendix 2. The submissions and Hansard transcript of evidence may be accessed through the Committee's website at http://www.aph.gov.au/senate_ca.

Acknowledgments

1.4 The committee would like to thank the individuals and groups who contributed to the inquiry. In particular, the committee would like to acknowledge the many individuals who provided information concerning their particular circumstances. While the committee is unable to deliberate on individual cases, the information

provided built a picture of the issues arising from the implementation of native vegetation laws and greenhouse gas abatement measures.

Structure of the report

1.5 The committee's report is structured as follows:

- chapter 2 provides an overview of native vegetation, land use and regulatory frameworks in Australia;
- chapter 3 covers issues raised in evidence in relation to the impact of native vegetation laws on a range of matters including land value and productivity, families as well as a discussion on compliance and assessment regimes;
- chapter 4 addresses compensation arrangements; and
- chapter 5 provides the committee's conclusions and recommendations.

1.6 The report focuses therefore on the first item in the terms of reference.

1.7 The second item in the terms of reference required the committee to examine the impact of the Government's proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme and the range of measures related to climate change announced by the Leader of the Opposition on 2 February 2010.

1.8 While the committee did receive some evidence in relation to this element of the terms of reference, this was not the focus of the overwhelming majority of submissions, which primarily addressed the impact of native vegetation laws.

1.9 The committee does not believe it received sufficient evidence and information to undertake considered deliberation on this matter. The committee has therefore decided not to make any comments regarding this element of the terms of reference.