

30 May 2023

Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretariat

On behalf of Property Rights Australia (PRA) please find enclosed our concerns regarding the Inquiry into food security in Australia.

### **1) About PRA**

PRA was formed in 2003 to protect the property rights of those unfairly targeted by the Vegetation Management Act 1999. We are a non-profit organisation of primary producers and small business people mostly from rural and regional Queensland who are concerned about the continuing encroachment on the rights of private property owners in the development, introduction and administration of policies and legislation relating to the management of land, water, and other resources. Set up in South West Queensland, PRA's membership now extends across most states and multiple major rural industries, PRA is not affiliated to any political party.

### **2) Introduction**

The only reasons that food producers will not be able to produce enough food to feed our expected increase in population by 2050 and some surplus to export are impediments, which are often not based on sound science, put in place mostly by government at the behest of environmental and other community organisations.

As well as red and green tape food producers are increasingly squeezed out of suitable areas. Vegetation Management Laws have made some areas unusable or almost unusable for their intended purpose. Reef Regulations similarly have curtailed production in some industries with the jury still out in others.

The UN has set a goal of 30% of land locked up in protected areas and therefore out of production. Similarly, 30% of the sea is expected to be locked out of production. The headlong rush towards renewables by a certain date is being done without any planning which protects high quality agricultural land from other permanent uses such as acres of solar panels, windfarms, and associated powerlines.

Curtailed use of irrigation water is becoming a huge problem affecting our intensive fruit and vegetable areas with water being diverted to other uses. No new dams have been built in decades and efforts to repair or extend existing dams have not eventuated.

Rather than agriculture of any sort being encouraged, the ad hoc approach of continuously downgrading the importance and usefulness of agriculture, means that all the means of production are becoming harder to access. Instead, there are several curbs on production which will not be easy to turn around once sacrificed.

### **3) Issues**

#### **3.1) Blighting of Property Rights**

*Property blight (sometimes referred to as 'planning blight' or 'blighted land') is the reduction in marketability and value of land as a result of a public sector decision.*

This is a problem which we in PRA see far too much of. The Acquisition of Land Act 1967 urged generosity in compensation. This mostly seems to have fallen by the wayside in rural and semi-rural areas.

Obviously, for large, broadscale infrastructure projects, those often most affected are rural landowners on productive farms who have their land acquired, devalued, rendered less efficient and have a reduction in amenity, one of the reasons that many people move to the country.

What we see nowadays, is an inability to predict whether compensation is likely to be harshly negotiated by the State for full acquisition and for easements, multiple suggested routes, often none of which are satisfactory when a better one exists and as pointed out by landowner groups, long periods of insincere consultation and wasting of landowner's time. The State has not proven itself to be a model government and acting in the interest of those they are disturbing.

No-one would wish to be in the position of some of the landowner's who approach PRA, greatly stressed and knowing that their property is losing value by being gazetted as an easement, sometimes for a long abandoned or long completed project. Further, no-one would want to see anyone be in a situation where they are forced to sell with this blight over their property as a result of death, illness, or hardship.

It certainly appears that sometimes, and becoming more common, governments deliberately blight the value of groups of properties before acquisition. This is unacceptable. All legislation and regulation which limits and/or controls the purposes to which a productive property can be put cause a certain amount of blighting, not least of all because they are a sap on farm productivity. The Vegetation Management Act 1999 and the Barrier Reef Regulations (2019 not the full title) are two examples of this.

These discussions can relate to easements for powerlines often over high value agricultural land, discussions about not renewing leases for any purpose including as national parks or reducing irrigation entitlement. Some recent irrigation entitlement cuts have been extreme, rendering associated farms unviable and therefore worthless. Is government prepared to

pay full, fair and unblighted compensation and take that land out of production. Obviously, irrigable land is high quality agricultural lens and excellent for food production. Government needs to have more care than that.

Many instances should be avoidable or could be handled more efficiently, sensitively and showing respect for the usually well thought out alternate opinions on landowners.

### **3.2) Extremists**

Environmental extremists have successfully shut down whole industries, costing jobs and destroying entire communities. Many more industries are well down the track. These industries can and have transformed themselves and jumped through the extremist hoops to no avail. When governments fail to support them, they are abdicating their responsibilities.

The native timber industry is the most visible example of this. While not food producing, it does provide a necessary renewable resource and signposts where other industries that are food producing are likely to end up.

Groups like WWF and The Wilderness Society (TWS) constantly defame our livestock industries in extreme and untruthful ways. Not only is the pressure on social media and electronic media constant, but they submit to governments that Australia is conducting trade talks with and claim that “deforestation” in Queensland is a problem, which it is not. This was a reality in recent British trade talks. They also try to convince significant customers like McDonalds of the same scenario.

There can be only one reason for these extreme measures and that is to destroy out significant cattle industry in Queensland initially.

The Barrier Reef Regulations were put in place at the behest of the Green organisations and as a result we have significant farming and horticultural industries under threat from the reduction in Nitrogen fertiliser, a reduction planned by WWF since the year 2000.

This is an example, not just of farms going out of business, but of other chinks in the supply chain falling over due to lack of supply.

The WWF submission to this Inquiry took another opportunity to have a kick at the beef industry once again. This has been aided and abetted by the State Government’s new SLATS methodology, a methodology specifically designed to make it appear that landowners have cleared more trees than they ever have in the past. We know that not to be the case.

Quote:- Submission 60 WWF

***“ Opportunity: deforestation pathways for Queensland’s beef industry***

*The Queensland beef industry is an important part of both Australia’s economy and emissions profile, as the state’s largest agricultural export and largest source of agricultural*

*emissions. Consumer preferences, trade regulations and market signals are demanding not only carbon-neutral products but a deforestation-free and nature-positive beef industry. For example, The European Union (EU) has approved a new law preventing companies selling imported products linked to deforestation in EU member states. Companies must prove imported soy, beef, palm oil, wood, cocoa, coffee, and some value-added products such as leather and chocolate, are not linked to deforestation. 17 As recognised in a recent WWF Australia report, the beef industry has significant scope to reduce the loss of mature forests while further expanding the area of land being regrown with natural forest, while also contributing to Queensland's and Australia's emissions reduction targets.18 Such agroecological practices demonstrate ecological and economic gains, and we encourage the inquiry to consider these learnings in determining future policy and regulatory frameworks.”<sup>1</sup>*

In defence of the Queensland beef industry, we would like to point out that the UN and EU do not regard maintenance of agricultural land, and that is exactly what most of Queensland is, as deforestation.

Most of what is cleared for agriculture is not primary forest. Land is regularly declared “remnant” according to “definition” under the Vegetation Management Act 1999 and is presently after 15 years. Observers claim that much of it is declared before 15 years based on height and girth growth.

Further, much of what is counted as “deforestation” is, in reality, woody weeds and regrowth. Some is even exotic woody vegetation.

Claims that the beef industry is the largest source of agricultural emissions are based on smoke and mirrors. To the degree that it has any emissions, of course it will be the greatest source as it is by far the largest industry. Since the 1990s, it has also been the greatest source of Australian carbon credits allowing Australia to meet its international obligations. We have earned our credit but every drop of blood is not enough for extremist organisations. The definition of a forest under UN rules is an area of 2 ha with at least 10% canopy cover. Under the Queensland new SLATS methodology this goes down to half a ha with 10% canopy cover.

Queensland protocols also allow for pixels to be counted where NO clearing has occurred because clearing is counted at a “landscape scale”. Trying to get a clear picture of what “landscape scale” is from the Government methodology document is impossible.

Animal extremists have become more vocal in recent years with very recent evidence given in Senate estimates by the CEO of the pork industry, Margot Andrae, of the harassment that she and her staff members have been subjected to.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Inquiry into food security in Australia Submission 60 p7 WWF

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/SenatorCanavan/videos/781231440068742>

TWS made good use of the aforementioned SLATS methodology in an extreme and unnuanced billboard campaign conducted in Brisbane city in April 2022.

### **3.3) Vegetation Management Legislation**

The effects of Vegetation Management Legislation have always been underestimated. It suits the narrative because the vegetation which regrows yields such great Carbon credits and saved the rest of Australia from having to make real sacrifices for a very long time. Reality is that small family-owned businesses are bearing the burden of having large areas of their properties unusable or of minimal use.

Because the change has been made over time, the pain suffered by individual small operators has been largely invisible.

### **3.4) Great Barrier Reef Legislation**

Reef legislation is just one more set of regulation which is intrusive, time consuming and punitive, all of which was unnecessary. The methods used to measure participation were and are, so inaccurate as to be entirely inappropriate as an excuse for bringing in such draconian legislation.

Many of the fruit, vegetables, and meat which we consume daily are produced in Great Barrier Reef catchments. With curbs on Nitrogen and Phosphorous use and some chemicals already removed from approved lists production will inevitably be reduced.

This is with very little empirical data to back up claims that the reef is being damaged by sediment with naturally attached Nitrogen and Phosphorous, from fertilizer containing Nitrogen and Phosphorous nor pesticides which should no longer be mentioned as they barely register even with the most sensitive instruments.

All reports on which this legislation was based were heavily reliant on modelling which has not proven to be a great predictor of expected results with little to no harm occurring as a result of agriculture but curtailment of production will occur.

Canefarmers have already left that business as requirements are so exacting that the employment of a very expensive consultant is required. Mills are closing or approaching being closed in the same way that timber mills are closing, because they do not have enough supply.

For those who can dismiss cane production as merely a contributor to excess obesity, they need to remember the role sugar plays in preservation of foods and the manufacture of ethanol.

With electricity becoming beyond expensive and with blackouts predicted, reliance on freezers will need to decrease and skills such as food preservation using sugar will need to be revived.

Ethanol will be a valuable source of fuel in a different world.

### **3.5) Water Availability**

Water is unequivocally vital for any sort of agriculture, and therefore food security, to exist. The availability and particularly the affordable availability of water is becoming an increasing concern for those involved in agriculture.

Although water for stock and domestic purposes is provided for in the Australian Constitution, the constitution is increasingly being disregarded.

Bores are being depleted by mining and CSG activities and access to “new” bores for those who have bores depleted by resources industries is a legal minefield.

A relatively new risk for underground water is Underground Carbon Capture and Storage (CCG) as proposed by Glencore, with other applicants for similar operations waiting in the wings.

Carbon sequestration by contaminating a good underground water resource is unacceptable and dangerous and allows companies to escape their emissions profiles at the expense of other communities and Australian food security.

Glencore claims that a relatively small footprint will be contaminated. However, this is an experimental project with effects underground not really known. There are similar projects waiting in the wings ready to follow.

Irrigators are having entitlement removed in a myriad of ways. In the restructure of water plans, the government first started by taking a percentage of entitlements “for the environment”.

### **3.6) Irrigation**

The irrigated agricultural industry in Australia is worth \$15b annually and accounts for one quarter of all agricultural production.

Actions by government at all levels are increasingly making inroads into water allocations for irrigated agriculture. The Murray Darling Basin Plan is a mess. There has already been a huge amount of social dislocation, environmental damage, and bankrupted industry (dairy is an example) under the plan. As well as the brakes on production already caused by the completed buybacks and now, proposed buybacks, there is also a decrease in production as a result of forced flooding of farming and grazing land by the very mis-named “environmental” water.

In the Murray Darling Basin, water buybacks have devastated communities with businesses sent to the wall and government and other services no longer considered viable. The federal government is talking about more buybacks with problems repeated.

PRA does not understand why any government sticks with a dysfunctional and damaging plan.

The Mary Valley Water Supply Scheme which is presently under consultation in Queensland. A draft water entitlement notice (draft WEN) has been developed for consultation. Entitlement at this stage looks like a tiny fraction (one day's worth) of irrigation entitlement with many growers afraid that their crops will die. This includes tree crops like macadamias and avocados which are expensive to establish with a long maturity time. Growers are quite reasonably stressed.

A study of irrigation areas Australia-wide would show that there are many areas where these sorts of reductions are taking place if not with the same extreme percentage of reduction.

As well as the usual competitors for water supply such as towns and communities, there are new competitors such as environmental water, cultural water and protection of the Great Barrier Reef although detail on how these uses will work is inappropriately scant. Present plan reviews such as in the Mary River catchment in Queensland have a few more users attached and irrigators have been reduced to minuscule proportions of their entitlement. This will render their operations unviable.

In this new draft plan, one of the beneficiaries of this reduction in entitlement is supposed to benefit the Great Barrier Reef. The government needs to explain, in detail, exactly what science or modelling (including all assumptions) that this is based on.

Another relatively new beneficiary of water plans are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. *"[Unallocated] water can be made available for projects that provide social and economic benefits to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. Each water plan has a water management protocol which can be reviewed and changed to allow Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders to hold unallocated water reserves.*

*Once updated, the water management protocol will describe the conditions for granting unallocated water, such as:*

- *who can get a water entitlement (eligible people)*
- *how the amount of water available can be shared*
- *what social and economic opportunities this water can provide.*"<sup>3</sup>

This water is to be provided in the course of a planned review. The plan currently under review is the Mary River Catchment. The government urgently needs to explain exactly what economic opportunities will be available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and what they can do with water entitlement. Will they be able to sell it? Will they be in direct competition with established farmers for water entitlement?

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.qld.gov.au/firstnations/environment-land-use-native-title/water-reserves-licences/indigenous>

Irrigators in this catchment are devastated at the ridiculously uneconomic entitlements they have been offered to accommodate an ever-increasing list of beneficiaries including as well as the above, a pumped hydro scheme and environmental water. Community water has always been part of the program and will remain so.

Section 2.2.3 of the Minister's Report in the Statement of Intent document has as an aim, "providing water for agricultural expansion".<sup>4</sup> This aim is difficult to understand when the existing growers are concerned that their present businesses will be wiped out through lack of entitlement.

This is another one of the cumulative hits on food security.

### **3.7) Fossil Fuel**

Fossil fuel has been, and will continue to be indispensable to agriculture for a very long time. It is vital to the operation of tractors, trucks and pumps. Australia is vast with long distances to travel and sometimes an unreliable power supply. Electric vehicles will be a long way off.

Of concern for a long time now is the very short time for which Australia has a supply of fossil fuel. Any disruption to that supply chain could see agriculture stymied. The freight and logistics industries have already outlined their concerns about this and the sometimes poor quality of remote roads. It is not just about the people who use the roads. It is about the produce they are carrying. Having food products that are unable to reach consumers is a problem that has always existed in third world countries. We should not allow that problem to emerge here.

### **3.8) Mining and CSG**

The extent of mining and Coal Seam Gas projects in Queensland is huge. The Queensland government likes to live with the illusion that they and agriculture can co-exist. Any consideration for agriculture has been hard fought over many years, is ongoing and is still unsatisfactory.

Almost every time that one of these resources companies moves into a new area we are almost back to the beginning in the treatment of landowners and both they and landowners in a new area need to be educated about some of the access rights and compensation rights which have already been negotiated and sometimes legislated but there is still a long way to go.

All encounters with resources are time wasting and productivity sapping, some more than others.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.rdmw.qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/1668141/statement-intent-draft-mary-plan.pdf](https://www.rdmw.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1668141/statement-intent-draft-mary-plan.pdf)  
p 12 of 38.



One issue recently dealt with is the issue of deviated drilling where companies drilled sideways into properties which were not notified with all the future documented risks of bore depletion and subsidence without any of the protections or compensation.

The companies eventually caught up with the legislation and retrospectively gave notice which is not allowed for in the legislation.

More recently the issue has come to the fore as companies move into super productive, fertile alluvial plains which have farms on exact gradients and a natural rainwater flow which feeds and nourishes the whole of landscape. Subsidence here of just a few millimetre can cause a major disruption to tightly managed cropping.

This is where it is obvious that government favours resources over cropping as they have steadfastly refused to look at subsidence which they regard as minor (and is measured by the companies themselves anyway). What is minor subsidence in a grazing area is not minor subsidence in a tightly managed cropping area.

One of the landowners who has complained about not being able to crop an area due to waterlogging, of what the resources companies regard as minor subsidence, has been vindicated with a sinkhole now forming in the area.

These sorts of impediments to efficiency and productivity extrapolated over the entire area translates into an impediment on food availability.

### **3.9) Availability of Land for Agriculture**

Those involved in agriculture have long been concerned at the decreasing supply of land that is put to any agricultural use.

Acreages taken out of production have been land set aside for national parks. Farmers and graziers soon became aware that national parks were not doing the job they are claimed to be doing which is to protect biodiversity. They also became undesirable neighbours. With lock up and leave policies it soon became apparent that exotic weeds and feral animals bred up in national parks. Untamed and unmanaged land, much of it covered in flammable weeds became an extreme fire hazard.

With an aim of 30% protected area, we getting to a sizable area out of production. The productivity and efficiency of agricultural enterprises has always been impinged upon by mining, CSG and other resource activities. It all impacts food security.

Hectares of solar panels and wind turbines take more land out of production with much of this infrastructure sited on high quality agricultural land. This shows the hallmark of an unformed policy for renewables with no reservations or conditions and a hell for leather attitude.

Added to this impingement are the tens of thousands of kilometres of powerlines for renewable energy, too many of which will be hosted by farming families.

Carbon farming may sound like a great idea and an easy out for an industry which must cover off on its Carbon emissions. Some communities have suffered from these areas being locked up with families moving and schools and other services being reduced. Also reduced is agricultural production.

Worthy of note here are the growing number of impediments to farmed agriculture and the ability of a landowner to move seamlessly from livestock and cropping and back again taking note of prices, shortages, seasonal conditions, and other risk factors.

In Queensland, it is not possible for a livestock producer, particularly in in a Great Barrier Reef catchment, to just decide that he will plough a paddock and decide to grow a crop where there is an anticipated shortage. Unless he has a cropping history a permit must be applied for involving the use of expensive consultants with no guarantee that permission will be given. It is little surprise that few applications have been made.

Cultural Heritage laws with what appears to be state and federal duplication in some states, mean that there will be delays caused by processes dictated by regulation.

Farming is not a vocation where you can always plan on paper exactly what you are going to do. It depends on a plethora of risk factors and you cannot just sit it on a shelf. A missed opportunity is one that will never be recovered.

### **3.10) Biosecurity**

Biosecurity is very important to all agricultural industries. However, it is not farmers who should be solely responsible for the cost of it. It is a community benefit which allows for plentiful, healthy food at a reasonable cost. Farmers are not producing some unnecessary good but something that is vital to everyone. That should be recognised.

Importers and tourists are the most likely sources of contamination or biosecurity breaches. The container levy needs to be implemented and a per head charged on tourists entering the country.

It is just not good enough to say that farmers benefit so they should pay. They seem to be paying for just about everything at the moment.

The closeness of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) to Australia is concerning. If it were to break out in Australia, the economy would suffer noticeably. Long term, economic effects and food price increases would result. The efforts of Australia in assisting with vaccination for that and Lumpy Skin Disease must continue.

However, other industries have suffered incursions. White spot in prawns caused severe economic hardship. In this case it was the importers who played a large part in allowing this disease to enter the country. Clearly, importers need to bear some responsibility and resellers need to educate consumers.

One of the most affected industries is the flower industry with more incursions of floral diseases than any others.

Pests and diseases (fall army worm is an example) can wipe out whole crops overnight.<sup>5</sup> All such crop destroying diseases have the ability to affect food supply and increase prices to consumers. In the past apples and bananas have suffered outbreaks of disease.

There is a lack of investment in State and regional biosecurity frameworks which has weakened our ability to mount effective and producer sensitive responses to new incursions. The kill everything immediately, as in the white spot incursion, without allowing for reasonable recovery is soul destroying and breeds mistrust.

There also needs to be a more effective plan to suppress impacts of established pests on food production systems.

Stricter border controls and controls on the types of imports are necessary.

### **3.11) Fertilizer Availability**

One of the most common commercial fertilisers is Urea or one of its derivatives. Urea production plants in Australia are not common with one substantial new one not due to start production until 2025 and one recently closed or about to close due to the high price of gas, one of its key ingredients. Most of our Urea is imported, about 80 % of it from China.

Fertiliser prices have more than tripled since COVID 19. This will send the prices of farmed goods up by a commensurate amount while decreasing production.

Renewables do not produce fertiliser.

### **3.12) Trucking and its Impediments**

The freight and logistics industry has already submitted on some of the challenges it faces including poor road infrastructure and the possibility of unavailability of diesel fuel for long haul routes as Australia does not keep a long-term reserve of fuel in the country and no longer manufactures it in Australia.

We support their position.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://inql.com.au/statewide/2023/04/20/the-harder-they-fall-how-qld-is-putting-the-bite-on-a-damaging-pest/>

Technical Grade Urea, is used to manufacture AdBlue, an ingredient in diesel truck fuel which is used to decrease Nitrous Oxide emissions. During COVID 19 the government subsidised the Incitec Pivot Urea plant to produce technical grade Urea for Ad Blue. Even when AdBlue was unavailable in some areas and the price skyrocketed where it was available, the government did not put a moratorium on its mandated use and truckies who ran without it were still able to be booked for operating illegally. This stopped trucking for a period in some areas.

Ninety percent of Technical Grade Urea comes from China but the curbed exports to keep the domestic price down.

Recently, floods in Far North Queensland have destroyed thousands of kilometres of road and bridges making them impassable.

All these remote areas produce food and fibre from horticulture to livestock and cotton.

How fragile our freight and logistics system is.

### **3.13) Labour Availability**

We are headed for a severe shortage of agricultural labour. Generations of farmers are testament to the fact that agriculture is not an unskilled occupation despite beliefs to the contrary.

We are an agricultural country but many of our agricultural colleges, all in Queensland, have been closed down. In-school programs have been closed down. This knowledge bank will be irreplaceable.

As recently as last year, imported labour programs were shut down with fruit and vegetables left to rot. There had already been arrangements put in place for foreign workers but they were torpedoed after the election. In these sorts of situations, some common sense should prevail. Individuals bear the cost of this.

### **3.14) Energy Price and Availability**

News on energy price and availability is not good. The Australian Energy Regulator has just decided to raise the price of electricity with Queensland amongst the highest rises.

Agriculture requires electricity for pumping water for both crops and livestock. Long before these rises there were farmers who were not planting crops because they could not afford the electricity bill to pump irrigation water. The situation has only worsened. The future also holds the threat of unpredictable blackouts, particularly if coal fired power stations are allowed to close.

### **3.15) Supply Chain Fragility**

Many people, including some farmer's organisations, politicians and commentators seem to take our food security for granted because we produce so much and export such a high percentage.

They usually work from the production end and wonder how we could go from a net exporter to not meeting our own needs.

It will not necessarily be the producers who exit the market first. All negative effects on agriculture and their support teams are cumulative. Sometimes exponentially so causing an industry to fall like a house of cards. Sometimes it will likely be all the support teams which fall first. Processors and centralised packing stations may find energy costs and labour shortages too hard to deal with. They also need water which is being directed in unproductive ways. Transporters will exit the market when roads are poor and poor availability of fuel makes it too expensive to recoup.

With the extreme activism of green groups and the closure of the native forestry industry, and plantation timber unable to keep up there is already a shortage of wooden pallets on which many food items are transported.

Taking food security for granted will be a fatal mistake.

### **3.16) Seafood Industry**

Food security remains the focus of the Australian seafood industry and specifically the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) who are funding SafeFish to develop an actionable risk register (ARR) to help Australian seafood sectors identify and manage their most relevant risks in an effective and proactive way.

There has been an unfortunate breach of Australia's food security system which was highlighted by the White Spot Disease incursion in Moreton Bay. The seafood industry warned Biosecurity Australia of the potential catastrophic failure of allowing uncooked, green prawn product into the country. In 2007. This warning was ignored and in 2017, the Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) made the following concerns:

- 'There is a clear possibility of continuous cross-infection between aquaculture and wild fisheries once an exotic virus establishes itself in Australian waters.
- Establishment of an exotic disease carried into Australia on prawn meat would have severe flow-on effects throughout the entire marine environment.
- There would be serious socio-economic effects in wild fisheries and downstream industries, with serious consequences for regional economies and employment.
- The establishment of exotic prawn diseases in Australian waters would add enormous cost and complexity to current domestic fisheries management arrangements and may

render some current management practices impractical or destructive to the economic wellbeing of Australian fishers'<sup>6</sup>.

QSIA makes its view clear regarding food security and issues regarding fisheries policy development, 'The seafood industry is extremely passionate about food security. We take this very seriously and consider our seafood producing boats and businesses as playing a key role in providing an accessible renewable high protein resource – fish from the sea. For decades fishermen have raised the importance of food security at Government level, but it certainly appears that this is not a priority, when the Queensland Government's Sustainable Fisheries reform is in fact reducing the availability of local seafood, a community resource for local seafood lovers to buy and enjoy'.<sup>7</sup>

More recently, QSIA in conjunction with the recreational and charter fishing sectors have engaged in a dialogue regarding the validity of the most recent Spanish Mackerel stock assessment in 2021. QSIA has appointed a world leading Stock Assessor conduct a review the stock assessment.<sup>8</sup> If the stock assessment was not fit for purpose, what will this mean in relation to the management of fish stocks in Queensland? What are the implications for industry, recreational and charter fisheries and critically, Australian seafood consumers?

### **3.17) Fake Meat Products**

Plant based and other alternative "meats" have largely attracted funding and support on the back of attacking real meat. They have denigrated their environmental credentials and the health credentials of meat.

Meat is a nutrient dense food and is not the dietary pariah it is made out to be. Processed foods are much more dangerous to health. Recent studies are also showing the environmental footprint of alternative "meats" may be higher than for real meats.

Investors in the US have recently sued one of the giant alternative meat companies for not being honest about results and timelines. In Australia some alternative meat companies are receiving government assistance including through CSIRO and are asking for government help through a "transition plan". Assistance to these companies is probably not wise.

### **3.18) Livestock Industries are Always Under Attack**

That this is the case is not in dispute. Not only is it not in dispute, much of it is not based on science.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.igb.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/gld-seafood-industry.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> QSIA (2022), link: <https://qsia.com.au/2022/01/19/open-letter-from-the-queensland-commercial-fishing-industry/>

<sup>8</sup> QSIA (2023), link: <https://qsia.com.au/ecsm/>

### **3.19) Fire**

Fire is important to the Australian landscape. Fire of the intensity that we saw in 2019-20 is not. It also destroys wildlife, houses businesses and farms. Controlled burns need to be introduced at a higher percentage of area. Government needs to reconnect with the experienced and professional foresters who have fought the flames and not academics who have not.

Fire breaks in almost every state are woefully inadequate. In Queensland they can be from 3m to 20m and a lot in between.

Twenty m is not enough to protect your house or your shed from intense fires such as we had in 2019-20. Government needs to take advice from someone other than green extremists on this matter or there will be even more loss of life.

### **4) Conclusion**

PRA has structured its submission with numerous headings to show the multiplicity of threats that agriculture faces and hoping that Senators can recognise how seriously the cumulative effects which appear small can add up to a great reduction in production and efficiency of distribution.

Bureaucrats are paid to come up with programs. Sometimes they work and sometimes not because they have not seen the issue and listened to locals.

Farmers do not need time wasting meetings with no complete answers. They do not need any more assurance schemes, certifications, surveys, audits, or pieces of paper to fill out other than those they, not someone else, deem necessary to their business.

There is much of the regulation and legislation which appears to be in place specifically to put farmers out of business. I say this advisedly.

Governments and the bureaucracy which advises them need to be conscious of the fact that farmers do not make one dollar until they put it in a box or on a truck and market it. It is a multi-level, multi-tasking operation to get all these elements together.

Drought and floods are enough hurdles for them to face.

The added impact of bureaucratic regulation reduces their ability to cope with those stressors which cannot be managed. I hate the word "resilience", it seems to offer an excuse for neglect and for governments not to take care of what can be taken care.

PRA would like to make a couple of comments about political advisors. It is not acceptable for government departments advising politicians to be weighed down with career environmentalists and career environmental academics. It is the job of government to

balance the economic, social, and environmental objectives. This is not being done with environmental objectives and green tape overtaking all else.

This is most definitely not good for food security.

As always, we are prepared to appear before the committee and answer any questions.

**5) Submission Contact**

For further information regarding this submission please contact Joanne Rea, PRA Treasurer on M: 0407 143 664 or E: [reajoanne200@gmail.com](mailto:reajoanne200@gmail.com).

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