

[REDACTED]

5 January 2024

**Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

Dear Agriculture and Land Sector Decarbonisation Team

**Submission to the Agriculture and Land Sectoral Decarbonisation Plan**

[REDACTED] welcomes the opportunity to participate in this consultation process. [REDACTED] is a member-based organisation made up of over 150 climate-focused civil society organisations advocating for Australia's rapid transition to a zero-emissions country. We seek a fair Australia, free of climate pollution, where people and nature are protected from dangerous climate change.

The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report has recognised for the first time that climate change and biodiversity loss are inextricably linked. To address climate change, the IPCC has found that protecting ecosystems is just as important as ending fossil fuels. Australia has made commitments to reduce emissions by 43% by 2030 and to be net zero by 2050. Australia has also made commitments to the Global Methane Pledge and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework as well as a national 'zero extinction' policy.

To meet these goals, all sectors of the Australian economy will need to decarbonise their operations while simultaneously protecting and enhancing ecosystems and habitats. We recognise that improving land management practices are vital for removing or sequestering carbon dioxide, however, it cannot replace the need for reducing and avoiding emissions. As part of Australia's long-term climate strategy, differentiating between geo-carbon and bio-carbon is key, particularly in the agriculture and land sectors.

The Australian agricultural sector, which is currently worth \$67 billion per annum and accounts for 15% of domestic greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>1</sup> A large proportion of agricultural emissions (80%) is in the form of methane which comes from farming livestock<sup>2</sup>, while the second largest source of emissions is from land-clearing.<sup>3</sup> Australian farmers are already feeling the impacts of climate change through fires, floods and droughts. A recent survey by [REDACTED] Farmers for Climate Action found that 55% of farmers believe that climate change is the single biggest threat they face.<sup>4</sup> Climate change has already slashed Australian farm profits by an average of 23% (roughly \$29,000) over the

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<sup>1</sup> [Low Emissions Future for Agriculture \(2021\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences; Snapshot of Australian Agriculture in 2023](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Achieving Net Negative Emissions in a Productive Agricultural Sector \(2020\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> [A Survey of Australian Agricultural Perspectives on a Path to Net Zero \(2023\)](#)

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last two decades.<sup>5</sup> Without strong action on climate change, farmers could see productivity and profit losses between 40% to 60% by 2060.<sup>6</sup> Seventy-one percent of farmers are already decarbonising their operations.<sup>7</sup> This shows that farmers want to take action on climate and need clear and long-term leadership from the Australian Government to ensure that farmers continue to benefit as the country decarbonises.

We therefore welcome the Department's consultation in decarbonising this important sector. We believe that this will increase the resilience of Australian farmers and offer new opportunities for better outcomes for nature.

As part of this submission, [REDACTED] makes the following recommendations;

1. A rapid phase out of fossil fuels from the Australian economy;
2. A rapid phase out of the clearing of native forests;
3. Accurate monitoring and reporting of emissions from the agriculture and land use sector;
4. Establish separate goals and targets that seek to reduce gross emissions from all sources including agriculture and natural ecosystems;
5. Increase investment in ecological restoration, land management and forest protection programs (ie agroforestry) by farmers, First Nations practitioners and other land managers;
6. Develop a national strategy for Nature-based Solutions (NbS) which recognises and prioritises key actions that advance the role of NbS as part of Australia's decarbonisation efforts and in building resilience against climate change impacts;
7. Increase investment into research, development and implementation of livestock methane reduction strategies (ie, animal feed or vaccines);
8. Provide tax breaks and low-interest loans for farmers to electrify their operations through the purchase of emissions machinery and equipment;
9. Support and scale-up of holistic farming practices such as regenerative agriculture and agrivoltaics.

We welcome the opportunity to work with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on the agriculture and land sector decarbonisation plan.

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<sup>5</sup> [Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences; Snapshot of Australian Agriculture in 2023](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Farming Forever: A Regional Plan for Climate Change and Agriculture \(2023\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> [A Survey of Australian Agricultural Perspectives on a Path to Net Zero \(2023\)](#)



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