



**Name:**

James Vosper

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**Which of the following best describes your situation?**

Industry representative

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**Are you responding on behalf of an organisation or industry body?**

Yes

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**Who are you responding on behalf of?**

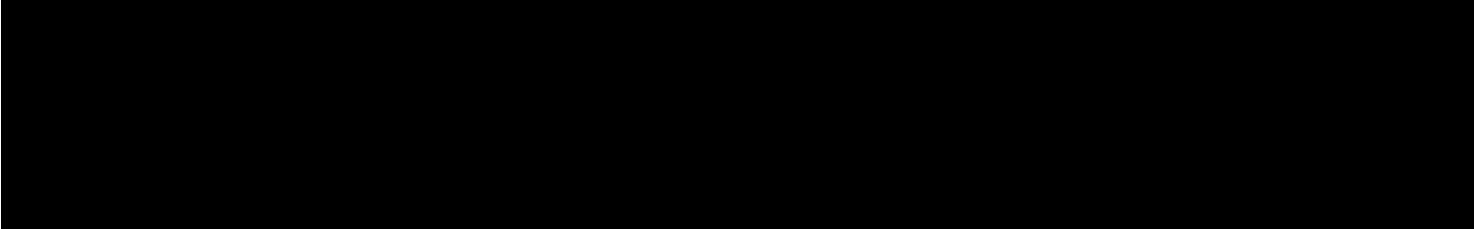
Australian Industrial Hemp Alliance and Carbon Futures

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**How would you like to respond?**

c. Both

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**What are the opportunities to reduce emissions and build carbon stores in agriculture and the land? What are the main barriers to action?**

There is a need for guidance on data capture and analysis. The current methodologies are tightly focussed on carbon from forestry. The Kyoto Protocol was established in 1997, at which time there was the opportunity to grow mature

forests to meet targets. The Australian Government targets of 43% by 2030 mean that forestry alone will not be sufficient. The Paris agreement of net zero emissions by 2050 would also not be met by forestry as it would require a massive movement to plant forests, even at the expense of productive farmland.

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### **How can we progress emission reduction efforts whilst also building resilience and adapting to climate change?**

It is important that methodologies be developed that can sequester significant amounts of carbon in the short term and ensure that the carbon remains stored either in the soil or in products made from biomass. There is a need to broaden the scope of the ACCU methodology, and incorporate Voluntary Carbon Markets (VCM), to include fast growing crops such as hemp. Hemp sequesters 22 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per hectare and when it is manufactured into hempcrete, permanently captures carbon. It is also fully recyclable. This is a link to a paper written by James Vosper in 2011. <http://hempalliance.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Industrial-Hemp-as-Carbon-Farming.pdf>. This was referenced by the United Nations in their publication available for download here:-

[http://hempalliance.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/UNCTAD-commodities-at-a-glance-\\_industrial-hemp.pdf](http://hempalliance.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/UNCTAD-commodities-at-a-glance-_industrial-hemp.pdf)

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### **Are there initiatives or innovative programs underway that could be applied or expanded on at a national scale?**

The Australian Industrial Hemp Alliance ([www.hempalliance.org.au](http://www.hempalliance.org.au)) has developed, in partnership with Carbon Futures ([www.carbonfutures.com.au](http://www.carbonfutures.com.au)) a methodology for certifying hemp carbon credits. AIHA operates in the Voluntary Carbon Market utilising the Core Carbon Principles framework developed by the Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market (ICVCM). Whilst hemp captures carbon it also produces emissions from cultivation, processing and manufacturing. This necessitates gathering data on emissions from Scopes 1,2, and 3 as defined by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol. Scope 4 addresses avoided emissions where a high emitting material is replaced by a sustainable material. This data is then used to design a Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) that balances inputs and outputs in hemp products such as hempcrete. Carbon Futures uses blockchain technology to ensure provenance.

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### **How can the Australian Government bring together existing effort and new initiatives into one coordinated plan?**

There is a global movement towards convergence of the compliance and voluntary markets. The Australian Government can embrace new and innovative methodologies. This will enable Australia to meet the commitments to 2030 and 2050 emissions reductions. It is important that the Australian Government continues to engage with organisations in the agricultural sector that are engaged in developing methodologies and practical solutions to mitigate climate change. It is important to note that the Australian Government as an organisation is responsible for its' own emissions. This could be manifested in the sponsorship of projects that have positive outcomes for the environment, rural economies and employment. Such projects can feed into a coordinated plan.

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### **What are the most important options to be further adopted or supported, looking in the short and the longer-term?**

In considering options to be adopted it is important to consider the life cycle of products, provenance and additionality. Riverlands (AIHA Corporate Member) has a project to produce fence posts and rails that are termite proof and fire resistant. Australia uses in excess of 900,000 fence posts each year. Wooden posts are replaced every 5-8 years and are subject to termites and fire. Concrete and steel posts have a significant carbon footprint. Hemp fence posts have an extended lifespan and are carbon negative. The hemp posts, consisting of hemp hurd and a proprietary binder have reached the pre- production stage. The posts are from a totally renewable resource, BPA free, and have a 54 MPA tensile strength. Further tests are being conducted on fire resistance and additional hurd/binder combinations. The posts are reinforced with hemp rebar which is stronger than steel, does not corrode

and is carbon negative. They were launched to the public at the Australian National Field Days (ANFD) at Borenore NSW October 26-28 as part of the exhibit staged by the Australian Industrial Hemp Alliance (AIHA). Reactions were unanimously positive with enquiries made about significant orders. This project was made possible with the assistance of Agrifutures.

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### **What are the practical solutions to increase uptake?**

In the case of the hemp fence posts the next step is to move to full production and begin a marketing campaign to establish market penetration and generate sales. This will need a significant investment. This is just one project that utilises hemp in a climate positive fashion. There are a large number of other uses for hemp in textiles, paper, plastics and building. The Victorian Government held an inquiry into how the hemp industry can be stimulated. The pdf below is a submission from Charles Kovess of TCI (<https://www.textilecomposite.industries/>). Charles is the current President of the AIHA. This is a full explanation of how government can help the hemp industry in Australia. [https://new.parliament.vic.gov.au/4a5c7d/contentassets/578f4d0d30f843ed9f1a9b79e13f7fb1/submission-documents/21.-kovess-international\\_redacted.pdf](https://new.parliament.vic.gov.au/4a5c7d/contentassets/578f4d0d30f843ed9f1a9b79e13f7fb1/submission-documents/21.-kovess-international_redacted.pdf) In October there was a round table discussion in the NSW Parliament organised by the Hon Jeremy Buckingham MLC and attended by Minister Tara Moriarty MLC. A question was asked as to how the NSW Government could assist in growing the industry. The hemp industry is highly regulated, and the easing of regulations would help with growth. Another way that governments can assist the industry is by specifying the inclusion of hemp products. This could be in the form of buildings, uniforms and more everyday products such as paper and plastics.

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### **How do you see the agriculture and land sectors contributing over the medium and longer-term? What are the opportunities to deliver emission reductions in parallel with wider goals?**

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### **How can the Australian Government better support agriculture and land sectors to:**

**a) drive innovation**

**b) build capacity**

**c) ensure the system enables emissions reductions**

a) drive innovation Innovation will be driven by investment in new cultivars that deliver greater biomass and add to soil carbon. In the case of hemp a crop grown for fibre in Australia would normally reach a height of 4 metres in 90-120 days. This crop will sequester 22 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. In California cultivars have been developed that reach 8 metres

in the same time period. There is an increase in fibre and hurd and consequently more CO<sub>2</sub> sequestered. b) build capacity Building capacity requires investment. Growing hemp for grain can be profitable on relatively small holdings with limited investment. In the case of growing hemp for fibre it is necessary to grow broadacre to achieve economies of scale. There is also the need for harvesting equipment and processing equipment. Hemp hurd (used to make hempcrete) is light but bulky and therefore costly to transport. There is the need to set up “hemp hubs” to process for multiple farms and deliver an end product to market. One project being planned is to grow and process hemp for hemp blocks. There has been significant research on the project and the estimated budget is \$20 million. This model can be replicated in other locations where land, transport and access to markets is suitable. This would also be an opportunity to engage indigenous groups. AIHA has already established a relationship with the Wanaruah Clan in the Hunter Valley NSW. This area is suitable for hemp and already has some infrastructure. To offer a real opportunity to build a hemp hub and create employment in indigenous communities would be a positive outcome for the area and the government. c) ensure the system enables emissions reductions It is important that methodologies are developed that provide robust data on the life cycles of products. Blockchain technologies are a method of ensuring that the claimed reductions are real. This will be reflected in the value of goods sold and the value of carbon credits generated.

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**What new initiatives could the Australian Government design that would support emissions reduction and carbon storage in agriculture and land and help ensure a productive, profitable, resilient and sustainable future for the sectors?**

Australia has 35.7 million hectares of organic farmland out of a global total of 76.4 million hectares. This equates to 47% or almost half of the global total of certified organic farmland (<https://www.fibl.org/fileadmin/documents/shop/1254-organic-world-2023.pdf>). There is a worldwide trend towards the consumption of organically produced products, especially in the food and beverage sectors. Australia is therefore in a position to be the world’s largest exporter of organic goods. During the meeting it was stated that Australia needed to take bold measures. One such measure could be to be the number one exporter of organic products.

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**A consistent and trusted approach for assessing and reporting emissions is often raised as a barrier to reducing emissions. Is there a role for the Australian Government in addressing this concern, and how can producers and land managers be supported?**

It is accepted that the estimation of emissions is a complex task. It is also accepted that there is a need for accuracy in reporting emissions. Whether carbon credits are used for offsetting or for trade there is a need for integrity in both the compliance and voluntary markets. There has been criticism of the Voluntary Carbon Market (VCM) and particular concern about the veracity of VERRA and The Gold Standard. In response to this the Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative (VCMI) has been established. The purpose of the VCMI is to build integrity in the voluntary carbon markets and a Claims Code of Practice has been published (<https://vcmintegrity.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/VCMI-Claims-Code-of-Practice-November-2023.pdf>). The Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market (ICVCM) has also been established and has published 10 Core Carbon Principles (<https://icvcm.org/the-core-carbon-principles/>). VCMI and ICVCM have made a commitment to collaborate (<https://vcmintegrity.org/joint-statement-vcmi-and-icvcm/>). If Australia is to take a leadership position in the global carbon market it would be advantageous to have a clear set of standards that landowners/farmers should adhere to. For farmers to accurately measure and report emissions it is necessary to have a set of tools that are easy to learn and time efficient. The calculation tools available (Fullcam/GAF) are difficult and time consuming to use for those professionals engaged in emissions reduction. Farmers and landowners would also experience difficulty in using these calculators. A simpler, faster and more intuitive calculation methodology would encourage more landowners and farmers to measure and report on their emissions.

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**What skills, knowledge and capabilities do you think producers and land managers need to implement change? What information and data would help them make decisions about emissions reductions and sustainable land management in the short and longer-term?**

One concern is whether the problem has been sufficiently outlined to the rural communities, producers and landowners. There is much confusion amongst producers and land managers as to what is required of them, how they can reduce emissions and the incentives for doing so. There is also a vigorous campaign from interested parties that suggest that there is no climate change. Where there is an admission that the climate is warming some parties suggest that there is no link to fossil fuel emissions. Research shows that the Australian marketing sector spent \$17.3 billion on advertising in 2022. The average Australian accesses multiple communication channels daily and is overwhelmed by commercial and editorial messages. Source : <https://accumulate.com.au/australian-advertising-industry-statistics-2023/> In view of this there needs to be a highly targeted education campaign to develop the knowledge and capabilities to implement change at the land management level. The data needs to be concise and condensed into easily digestible formats. This issue can be addressed via a comprehensive communications strategy and plan. This requires professional expertise and investment. It is a layered approach with no dominant channel. Considering the schedules that farmers/producers work to it also needs to be flexible. The following is a sample of activities that would help in the education process: - • Newsletters • Community meetings • Trade association communications • Trade publications • Emails • Webinars • Mobile applications • Interactive platforms • Platform training

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**Do you have any additional views or feedback that you would like to include in your response?**

Urgent action is required Projections from the Department of Climate Change, Energy the Environment and Water show that Australia is currently on track to fail to meet emissions reduction commitments: - “In June 2022 Australia updated its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), committing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 43% below 2005 levels by 2030. The revised 2030 commitment is both a single-year target to reduce emissions to 43% below 2005 levels by 2030 and a multi-year emissions budget from 2021-2030. Based on a 43% reduction by 2030, our emissions budget for this period is 4,381 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>-e.” “Under the baseline scenario, Australia is expected to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 32% below 2005 levels by 2030 and be 5% above Australia’s 2021-2030 emissions budget. Australia is expected to achieve a 38% reduction on 2005 levels by 2035. The baseline scenario includes existing federal, state and territory policies and measures as well as policies under the Powering Australia Plan where there is enough detail to include them.” Source : <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/climate-change/publications/australias-emissions-projections-2022> In view of this there is a need to act with a sense of urgency. This may require the government to finance or subsidise agricultural projects that are proven to sequester and store carbon. Accepted narratives are misleading There is an accepted narrative that fossil fuels create Australian jobs and to run down these industries costs jobs. This takes no account of the subsidies that Australian fossil fuel companies benefit from. Latest figures show that Australia subsidises fossil fuels at \$65 billion per year. It is estimated that 67,000 people are employed in fossil fuel extraction in Australia. According to the ABS Census of 2021, 239,000 are employed in Australian agriculture. It would be beneficial for agricultural industries that are making a positive change to receive financial assistance and create more rural wealth and employment. There is a need for agriculture to change the narrative and push back. This does have political implications and there is an imbalance in resources between those entities responsible for emissions and entities looking to reduce emissions. This campaign needs a full communications strategy and plan. At the time of writing it is understood that a \$1.2 million advertising contract has been awarded (<https://mumbrella.com.au/clems-awarded-1-2m-creative-services-contract-for-department-of-climate-change-808883>) James Vosper December 1st, 2023

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**Is your response confidential?**

No

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**Do you agree to your response being published on our website?**

Yes

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**I have read and understood the privacy notice and consent to the collection, use and disclosure of my personal information as outlined in the privacy notice.**

Yes

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**Confirm that you have read and understand this declaration.**

Yes

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## **The need for higher ambition**

*Climate change is already affecting Australia's producers and the environment. Reducing emissions is critical for reducing future climate risks for the agriculture and land sectors, as well as ensuring our industries are well-placed to compete in global markets. Australia is committed to taking action on emissions and both the agriculture and land sectors have an important role to play in supporting our national contribution to global efforts. (Page 9).*

### **7. What are the opportunities to reduce emissions and build carbon stores in agriculture and the land? What are the main barriers to action?**

There is a need for guidance on data capture and analysis. The current methodologies are tightly focussed on carbon from forestry. The Kyoto Protocol was established in 1997, at which time there was the opportunity to grow mature forests to meet targets. The Australian Government targets of 43% by 2030 mean that forestry alone will not be sufficient. The Paris agreement of net zero emissions by 2050 would also not be met by forestry as it would require a massive movement to plant forests, even at the expense of productive farmland.

### **8. How can we progress emission reduction efforts whilst also building resilience and adapting to climate change?**

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## **Building on existing effort and knowledge**

*There has already been significant action taken by industry, governments, First Nations peoples, local and regional communities to address climate change. (Page 12)*

### **9. Are there initiatives or innovative programs underway that could be applied or expanded on at a national scale?**

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#### **10. How can the Australian Government bring together existing effort and new initiatives into one coordinated plan?**

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### **Opportunities to reduce emissions**

*Looking in more detail, there are technologies, practices and other measures that can reduce emissions and increase carbon stores. Some are established and others are still emerging. (Page 15).*

#### **11. What are the most important options to be further adopted or supported, looking in the short and the longer-term?**

In considering options to be adopted it is important to consider the life cycle of products, provenance and additionality. Riverlands (AIHA Corporate Member) has a project to produce fence posts and rails that are termite proof and fire resistant. Australia uses in excess of 900,000 fence posts each year. Wooden posts are replaced every 5-8 years and are subject to termites and fire. Concrete and steel posts have a significant carbon footprint. Hemp fence posts have an extended lifespan and are carbon negative.

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Riverlands CEO, Kevin Wortes being interviewed by Michael Thompson on behalf of Agrifutures. (photo courtesy of AIHA).



## 12. What are the practical solutions to increase uptake?

In the case of the hemp fence posts the next step is to move to full production and begin a marketing campaign to establish market penetration and generate sales. This will need a significant investment.

This is just one project that utilises hemp in a climate positive fashion. There are a large number of other uses for hemp in textiles, paper, plastics and building.

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Another way that governments can assist the industry is by specifying the inclusion of hemp products. This could be in the form of buildings, uniforms and more everyday products such as paper and plastics.

## Developing emissions pathways

*The plan will explore different ways for agriculture and land to contribute to whole-of-economy emission goals, whilst also delivering on national priorities that include a profitable and productive future for agriculture, and sustainable management of Australian landscapes. (Page 21)*

### **13. How do you see the agriculture and land sectors contributing over the medium and longer-term? What are the opportunities to deliver emission reductions in parallel with wider goals?**

In the medium to long term there is still a role for crops that sequester carbon and have the potential to replace unsustainable carbon positive products. This is not only out of concern for the environment but will become a necessity. Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the environmental impact of their purchasing decisions. They are also becoming increasingly cynical of environmental claims that are vague or unsubstantiated. The ACCC publication on “Greenwashing by businesses in Australia” published in March 2023 (<https://www.accc.gov.au/system/files/Greenwashing%20by%20businesses%20in%20Australia.pdf>) showed that the number 1 sector making concerning environmental claims was food and beverages.

There are also implications for Australian exports. On October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, the EU launched phase one of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM). This will effectively become a carbon tax on imported goods. Whilst initially designed to prevent “leakage” from countries with lower environmental standards it will eventually apply to all imports. The US and other territories will be instituting similar schemes.

## Supporting and enabling change

*The plan will explore ways in which the Australian Government can help to accelerate emissions reduction in agriculture and increase carbon storage in the land. (Page 24)*

### **14. How can the Australian Government better support agriculture and land sectors to:**

#### **a) drive innovation**

Innovation will be driven by investment in new cultivars that deliver greater biomass and add to soil carbon. In the case of hemp a crop grown for fibre in Australia would normally reach a height of 4 metres in 90-120 days. This crop will sequester 22 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. In California cultivars have been developed that reach 8 metres in the same time period. There is an increase in fibre and hurd and consequently more CO<sub>2</sub> sequestered.

## b) build capacity

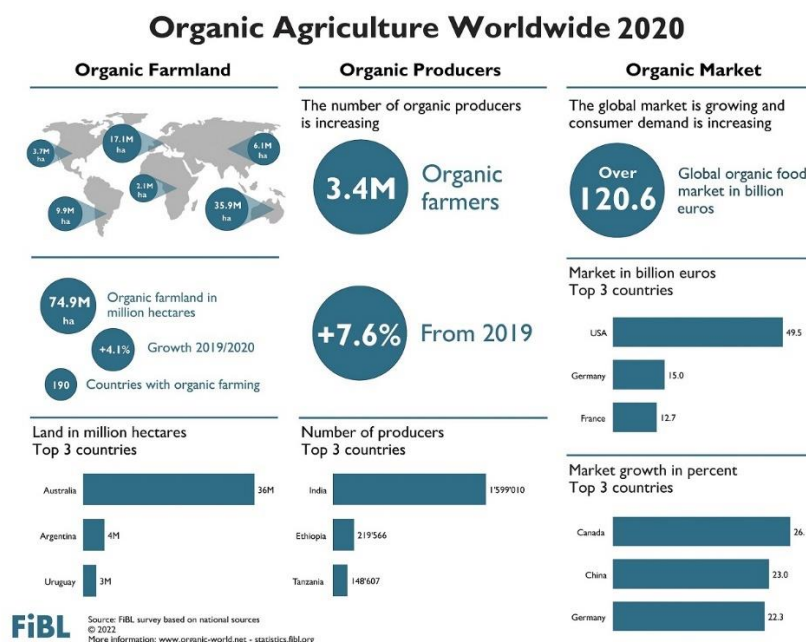
Building capacity requires investment. Growing hemp for grain can be profitable on relatively small holdings with limited investment. In the case of growing hemp for fibre it is necessary to grow broadacre to achieve economies of scale. There is also the need for harvesting equipment and processing equipment. Hemp hurd (used to make hempcrete) is light but bulky and therefore costly to transport. There is the need to set up “hemp hubs” to process for multiple farms and deliver an end product to market. One project being planned is to grow and process hemp for hemp blocks. There has been significant research on the project and the estimated budget is \$20 million. This model can be replicated in other locations where land, transport and access to markets is suitable. This would also be an opportunity to engage indigenous groups. AIHA has already established a relationship with the Wanaruah Clan in the Hunter Valley NSW. This area is suitable for hemp and already has some infrastructure. To offer a real opportunity to build a hemp hub and create employment in indigenous communities would be a positive outcome for the area and the government.

## c) ensure the system enables emissions reductions

It is important that methodologies are developed that provide robust data on the life cycles of products. Blockchain technologies are a method of ensuring that the claimed reductions are real. This will be reflected in the value of goods sold and the value of carbon credits generated.

## 15. What new initiatives could the Australian Government design that would support emissions reduction and carbon storage in agriculture and land and help ensure a productive, profitable, resilient and sustainable future for the sectors?

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**17. What skills, knowledge and capabilities do you think producers and land managers need to implement change? What information and data would help them make decisions about emissions reductions and sustainable land management in the short and longer-term?**

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Source : <https://accumulate.com.au/australian-advertising-industry-statistics-2023/>



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This issue can be addressed via a comprehensive communications strategy and plan. This requires professional expertise and investment. It is a layered approach with no dominant channel. Considering the schedules that farmers/producers work to it also needs to be flexible.

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- Newsletters
- Community meetings
- Trade association communications
- Trade publications
- Emails
- Webinars
- Mobile applications
- Interactive platforms
- Platform training

**18. Do you have any additional views or feedback that you would like to include in your response?**

### **Urgent action is required**

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*“In June 2022 Australia updated its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), committing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 43% below 2005 levels by 2030. The revised 2030 commitment is both a single-year target to reduce emissions to 43% below 2005 levels by 2030 and a multi-year emissions budget from 2021-2030. Based on a 43% reduction by 2030, our emissions budget for this period is 4,381 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>-e.”*

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Source :

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In view of this there is a need to act with a sense of urgency. This may require the government to finance or subsidise agricultural projects that are proven to sequester and store carbon.

## **Accepted narratives are misleading**

There is an accepted narrative that fossil fuels create Australian jobs and to run down these industries costs jobs. This takes no account of the subsidies that Australian fossil fuel companies benefit from. Latest figures show that Australia subsidises fossil fuels at \$65 billion per year. It is estimated that 67,000 people are employed in fossil fuel extraction in Australia. According to the ABS Census of 2021, 239,000 are employed in Australian agriculture. It would be beneficial for agricultural industries that are making a positive change to receive financial assistance and create more rural wealth and employment.

There is a need for agriculture to change the narrative and push back. This does have political implications and there is an imbalance in resources between those entities responsible for emissions and entities looking to reduce emissions. This campaign needs a full communications strategy and plan. At the time of writing it is understood that a \$1.2 million advertising contract has been awarded (<https://mumbrella.com.au/clems-awarded-1-2m-creative-services-contract-for-department-of-climate-change-808883>)

James Vosper December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023

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