

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

I am a fifth generation farmer from Dunedoo, NSW. My partner and I run a mixed farming enterprise on 2,500 acres in a very tightly held, "safe" farming community. I am extremely concerned for the future of agriculture in NSW and Australia especially considering the agreements the Federal Government has signed our country up for and the likes of the Net Zero Plan.

The Agriculture, Land and Emissions Discussion Paper states that "Australia's agriculture and land sectors are already feeling the effects of climate change. More frequent and extreme weather events, together with changing seasonal conditions, are putting pressure on productivity, farm performance and landscape health." Whilst I would agree there is more pressure on productivity, farm performance and landscape health and more 'natural disasters' I do not believe this can be attributed to "climate change". There is more pressure on farmers to produce more food, to feed the growing global population, from less land due to major land use conflicts eg. businesses and government locking land up for "carbon credits" and "biodiversity offsets" (the "rapid transition to renewables" will only exacerbate this issue). This sort of land use conflict is also leading to higher numbers of 'natural disasters' due to mismanagement of aforementioned land ie. little to no hazard reduction burns, inadequate fire breaks and major engineering solutions being built on unsuitable sites.

First Nations People, and then early settlers, were well known for conducting 'cool burns' to reduce fire risk during the hotter months. Now, bureaucracy prevents such methods. A lot of the time hazard reduction burns are being conducted in September/October when they should be happening in winter. I can only assume this is due to paper trail and manpower issues! When controlled burns are conducted correctly wildlife has a chance to escape and undergrowth is cleared without trees getting burnt so severely they cannot recover. There is also a lack of effective fire breaks/trails established in case of a major fire event. Whilst this would entail some land clearing would it not be more sensible to sacrifice a small amount of timber to save such vast areas? It is stated that "strategic fire management using traditional knowledge is a proven technique for reducing emissions."

Another major contributor to 'natural disasters' is man made engineering solutions being placed in inappropriate positions. Roads, bridges, causeways and railway lines etc have long been causing major changes in water flow in every part of the country. Some issues more substantial than others. For example, if a road is built up in a flood plain area and adequate culverts are not installed the water will flow in areas it has not before often causing destruction.

The Discussion Paper also states that "agriculture, as a sector in the NGA, made up 16.8% of national greenhouse gas emissions in 2020-21." Considering "agricultural producers manage over 50% of Australia's land" I believe more emphasis needs to be on what is happening on the other 50% of Australia's land. It is also stated that "energy and fuel use in agriculture" contributed a total of "2% of Australia's emissions, noting that this figure includes emissions from forestry and fishing industries" in 2020-21. What percentage of Australia's emissions did private household energy and fuel use in the same timeframe?

I couldn't agree more with the statement - "Australian agriculture plays an important role in regional Australia and in the national economy, as well as globally as part of the international supply of food." My family have been farming in the Dunedoo district for more than 200 years; if that is not sustainability, I don't know what is! "Australian agriculture has below average emissions intensities for beef and grains production compared to major developed nation producers and exporters, and our use of pesticides and fertilisers is amongst the lowest in the world." The National Farmers' Federation has also publicised a goal to "reach \$100 billion farmgate value by 2030". How can we, Australian farmers, feed more people, on less land, whilst reducing our emissions even more? The answer is, we can't! Australian farmers care about their land, their livestock and our communities so "more intensification in production systems" is not an option; we are already stretched to the limit, and judging by the numbers above, we are doing well!

"National Farmers Federation – economy wide net zero emissions by 2050, provided it is economically viable, there are no unnecessary regulatory impediments or sector specific targets, and global food security is taken into consideration." Net Zero by 2050 is not economically viable, farmers are struggling financially already! I believe there will be unnecessary regulatory impediments to reach such a ridiculous target and global food security will be at risk!

"Australia's expansive pasture-based production systems present a particular challenge in terms of delivering supplements to grazing livestock." This could not be more accurate. How would this work for grazing only operations? And, what would be in the supplements? I was under the impression the general public wants their produce without supplements!

Government managed public lands such as national parks have often been categorised that way to in an attempt manage offsets for certain projects or to meet targets. A lot of this land is a major fire risk, a harbour for noxious weeds, feral animals and animal diseases due to mismanagement. The same can be said for LLS managed Crown Lands. How can the Australian Government expect compliance from farmers when government managed land is in such chaos and we often are left to clean up the mess? For example, only last year mostly farmers fought a fire along the Black Stump Way near Tambar Springs, not once did an LLS employee arrive and attempt to assist.

It is my belief that the agriculture industry and therefore rural and regional Australia should not be left to carry the burden for metropolitan Australia. As an industry we might generate emissions but we also contribute to their reduction. Rural and regional people are generally resourceful, conservative and self sufficient and without us the Australian population will be left hungry, naked and sober!