



FRIENDS OF THE EARTH

Campaigning on Environmental issues in their social, political and human rights context

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RE. Draft Report Impact of Natural Vegetation and Biodiversity Regulations.

The Presiding Commissioner

Dear Sir/ Madam,
having worked my way through the Draft Report, I am impressed by the amount and the variability of the evidence the Inquiry has collected, but I am equally concerned at its lack of ecological relevance.

The most forceful conclusion emerging from the Report is, that the general farming community is either not aware of or does not want to see the seriousness of the extent of the ecological degradation of the Australian Environment, the bulk of which is agricultural land and where the greatest degree of the degradation is occurring, despite the well documented scientific evidence and the encouraging reports from those farmers who have made the transition from conventional practices and have adopted new farming systems that are more compatible with the eco-systems in which they are operating (Organic production, Permaculture, Biodynamic, Yeoman's keyline).

The Report also reveals that in the main Australian governments (there are too many of them) are handling the challenges arising from the increasingly recognized need for 'farming without harming' most inadequately. Even now, with the Wentworth Report on the table, there is still no indication that Australian governments understand and embrace their responsibilities to LEAD Australia's conversion to Ecological Sustainability which does entail much more than the conservation of native vegetation and biodiversity.

Although I am aware that the terms of reference limit the Inquiry to investigate the impact arising from the regulations on native vegetation clearance and biodiversity conservation, I feel duty-bound to submit to the Inquiry a highly relevant submission focussing on the

the future of the Sustainability challenge in which agriculture stands in the centre of Australia's ecological and therefore economic future.

For the Earth!

(Frank Miller)

Attachment: John Williams and Denis A Saunders, '*Land use and natural ecosystems: A revolution in land use is the key to a sustainable landscape*', CSIRO Canberra Laboratories.