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Recent Senate levy application... Comprehensive summary

SUBMISSION COMPULSORY AG LEVIES

Any Other Matters from a farmer and researcher perspective.

Farmers seem to be at the end of the food chain when it comes to subsidising the activities of research promotion for globe trotting boffins and experts not largely accountable for their actions or inactions on the industry's behalf.

Farmers pay income tax if lucky enough, their lump of fuel taxes, transport to schools, health care, elderly care, transport, fertilizers, grain, wool, beef to and from the farm and the markets to the seaboard or over seas. What farmers get for their produce, fuel is factored in for the farmer and for the consumer. Many families are lucky to see a grader in 1-2 years and tourists can come and wreck country roads for nothing flopping through bogs and ruts on the 'wilderness adventure' promoted by local government tourism. This might assist the local hotel motel or takeaway food and grog shop not farmers usually recipients of the wrappings, trespass and wreckreation activities enticed into areas inadequately policed for impact and damage.

Then there is GST, on inputs from working dog food to shearers equipment. If you are lucky enough to make an income selling drought affected stock before their time or selling your pinched wheat crop off for hay, your rice farm denied water you paid for, for a decade and received none because the government staffers burnt the Upper Murray from Canberra to Melbourne because they were philosophically against drought aid grazing, cool burning or timely selective logging to keep the vegetation fire safe. After the inferno then water is diverted off to the city fountains as drought affected farmers are offered a low interest loan to put the farm in over draft to keep feeding the people at below cost of production while they pay the Shire rates, the Local Land Service rates, the commodity levies to have a sleek well fed globe trotting scientists or other expert tell them they are *unviable*. Tell me if this is the wrong picture!

Some one has bought a dairy farm on the coast as a country retreat and dairy farmers deregulated head for an irrigation farm next door to the rice farmer and they both lose their water burnt off the catchment and diverted to the city where the educated boffins know all about the agricultural industry paid for by levies and taxes paid compulsorily irrespective of farmers getting loyalty or value for money.

The recent beef live export debacle is a case in point involving bodies funded by farmers levies where someone well outside the industry used their experience in covert operations talked their way into restricted premises putting food assurance at risk, taking sensational video footage of operations in a slaughter house with this footage held back to the point of maximal potential interruption in the seasonal activities of the beef pipeline when it was put to air on TV media without verification as to the voracity of the footage being what it was projected to be. Footage aired ***without the opportunity*** for other perspectives to be explored such as live export being required to certain hot and tropical countries with large human populations that do not have roads, electricity or refrigeration infrastructure to deal with food gathered daily from fresh food sources including meat, fish, fruit, vegetables.

Australians are very complacent and affluent by comparison generally unaware of logistics they take for granted assuming shops feed everyone across the globe as their food is placed on foam



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trays, in bottles and plastic bags as if by miracles.

Agricultural levies being paid by the millions of dollars to research shelf lives, quality assurance, premises hygiene, transport standards, containerisation promotion to maintain optimal turnover etc.etc.

Were they paid actors, staged play for the sensational video footage? An act of international terrorism or war, breach of law enforcement, trespass? Call yourself an 'activist' and you can work outside the law and accepted social processes? Exempt from costly consequences justified for environmental or animal welfare claims. Australians pay at least \$20B a year for Federal government representation, another \$100B for state and territory government supported by various taxes farmers are not exempt from for fuel, GST..., farmers pay again millions of dollars of levies, stock identification, each year for quality assurance and disease or contamination traceability, trade and promotion representation, the tax payers including farmers pay in the order of \$1.3B annually for a public news service to give the public a **balanced** view of the nations affairs. Overnight instead we had the beef industry ambushed with an international event on our hands and the trade suspended immediately no notice or consultation of the implications for animal welfare suspending livestock needing provision of feed, water etc. in transit. Unknown hardship in the country of destination where food budgets for people including children were also interrupted. Pay via internet a public donation for these very well dressed and well travelled activists to investigate aspects of animal cruelty as an adjunct to their travels. One bad apple throw away the industry assumed guilty and to be a bunch of sadistical rednecks.

Farmers facing a drought, fires, financial challenges had to hold 100000s of cattle above what their management had intended and recently locked out of vast areas of land by people claiming biodiverse areas grazed for decades were at risk! Who says? A philosophical stance, precautionary principle claims of "threat and potential damage" no need for scientific established fact peer reviewed outside a closed dynasty and the grazing research funded by those making claims biodiversity was at risk from grazing. Now farmers are bled to pay to answer the denial and accusations not the lobby groups whose membership is invariably the beneficiaries of levy research. Australia's soils, vegetation, native animal are projected to have coevolved **without** large animal ecoservices which is in fact quite wrong, contradictory to other aspects of scientific evidence studiously ignored to achieve various agendas. Farmers activities **proven guilty** before any fair and transparent process of appeal or protected by law to retain access to their lease land soft title for example. Government reports, school and university educational, public media material lathered with adverse philosophical comment based on precautionary principle such agricultural levies are directed to a rear guard action to answer 20 years hence some spurious unsubstantiated claim increasing the costs of production missing opportunity for R&D to be more wisely spent on more pressing issues of providing more food to more people with fewer industry inefficiencies. Farmers are assumed to be guilty of being liars, uneducated eye witnesses, guilty of damaging the environment or animal welfare which triggers more resources into research coffers said to be expert, impartial, well educated, loyal and honest, available for hire at generous salaries and packages.

Murray basin reform increased the plight of farmers dealing with excess stock at short notice and another 2 years of drought, irrigators denied water that was not being yielded down wind of rain cloud inhibition sources and the catchment mismanaged such crucial forests geared to harvesting rainfall were burnt down as a consequence of demands by people with little or no land managerial experience or knowledge of fire impact over vast areas with long term if not perpetual impacts on the nations water supply. Stockmen denied access to the high rainfall areas were promised irrigation water. Now they are denied both. Taxes, rates, levies declared dead money for food security without notice.

Top end cattle due to be exported sent south putting the entire industry under the pump. The Murray basin water reform we had to have had, destroyed 450000 large bale budget in fodder in the Lachlan valley alone also at short notice. Live export affected local and



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international markets competition for feed water available resources across entire rural industries picking up the consequences buffering greater travesties of a beef traffic jam, depressing farmers returns and capacity to compensate for unforeseen circumstances denied their contingency plans paid for in rates, levies, taxes and at the stroke of a pen their drought aid grazing options, timber resources superannuation and drought aid income turned into a fire ball tourist destination set to burn the region. National sparks have no reason to deal with weeds, pests or fuel loads, pay rates or levies, exempt as neighbours muster the escaping vermin, weeds and volunteer to put out the fires equipped by trucks bought with their fire insurance premiums spiralling out of control because of massive claims for fencing, livestock, buildings, injury. Park staff are paid overtime and farmers volunteer for front line service while leaving their stock fodder lines in dusty paddocks to attract scrutiny from those calling themselves environmentalists and animal welfare activists with public sector paid incomes. Grazing has been a fire risk management strategy for millions of years but there is a myth out there it is not effective such more public funded research is to be manipulated variously. The first to know the research outcomes are the lobby groups curiously armed with all the statistical information gleaned of public service.

Environmentalists driven regulation and legislation closed down grazing leases in the high country and Murray red gum forests etc. stock routes road side grazing to and from, to become traffic routes exclusive for motor vehicles and tourists 'exclusive cow manure free destinations' amounting to many livestock denied drought aid grazing in this very complacent city centric nation. Claims of animals being **destructive of biodiversity** are spurious endorsed by national park title thrown over grazing leases and properties with long grazing histories, travelling stock routes management **favourable for biodiversity** evident by those that know. If the biodiversity was not thriving why bother with national park declaration? Why after drought aid grazing has been obstructed are there no audits for biodiversity abundance and complexity, disappearing from chronic stagnation. Farmers pay levies, taxes, rates and their services paid for are denied for a mere whim or perception, invalid foreign based dogma vilifying animals on the basis of the shape of their feet and marginalising farmers of those animals because their kindergarten teacher told the children "hooved animals ruin habitat." Opinion accepted as fact. Farmers levies are spent trying to debunk the myth. Milk, meat, fish and eggs are brain foods for children and have been for millions of years to avoid production of more zombies.

Rural communities thrown in to drought with more cattle than expected, no money to provide for them, no drought relief grazing options, little available fodder reserves, misrepresentative and ill informed media and public debate to field, many farmers in the depths despair marginalised and vilified without trial or right of appeal by their own country chose suicide after shooting their drought affected cattle. The activists that set the entire debacle up with the help of sensation seeking journalists with a long track record of marginalising rural community minorities variously in media or careers in politics.

Most farmers pay multiple levies for wool, sheep meat, beef, dairy, grain, oil seed, fruit, veg, fish, eggs, pork, timber in the old days before the departmental lobbyists and activists sabotaged the bulldozers, dingo filled the watershed and took the farm to plant pines for Kyoto offsets and soak up the irrigators water with dense plantings ripped in at 2000+ trees a hectare. Only stockmen over stock not reforesters on the public purse for some unproven theory of "climate change" built around industrial pollution belching into the rainclouds causing droughts across farm land.

The government closed down CSIRO cloud physics so no one would understand or monitor dirty cloud from coal fire electricity generators or smelters, paper pulp mills, city transport inefficiencies. The environmental lobby were against cloud seeding because they wanted tourist destinations in the outback at bargain prices. How many farm levies paid for rainmaking research? How many farmers were asked about the relevance of rain for their business or capacity to produce food reliably down wind of Bob Hawks mineral boom undermining Australia on the sheep's back 1820 -1992. Neville Wrans dingo farm spilling across the nation, the fiasco of mulesing and shearing footages, not the dingo massacres the



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activists set up. Nothing said other than "dog traps and 1080 poison are cruel." Who says? No mention of the naturalised without consultation, dingo being a "*dangerous and savage dog unrestrained in a public place,*" massacring marsupial mammals taken for salvation in preference to drought aid grazing and fire risk mitigation on the watershed. More wool and meat levy money flows to put out the fires created in the media enjoying paper deals from pines. Prodingo.

So where do our levies go? Swisho parties the best finger food at the posh resorts selling produce or having industry conferences promotional material of innovations farmers might adopt if they had the money to do their own research and promotion if they had the \$12 billion dollars in wool levies paid since 1935. We could buy ourselves a very good wool value adding clothing, blanket, curtain, carpet industry. A smaller population used to have about 20 woollen mills there is lucky to be one or two survive the draconian environmental regulations All the innovations sent overseas for synthetic fibre industry to take advantage of or die in the patent office. The plastic whirl pool in the Pacific Ocean and the dyed rivers in China would be relieved. The billion dollar building industry could save on coal fired electricity air conditioning here and overseas by insulating homes and people with wool.

Beef or lamb levies spent on trade missions to Mars could be put through state of the art facilities, vacuum packed and set up for sale to countries without electricity. The fresh food market could be set up in various outlets. Why have meat and livestock levies if a TV program can organise national trade better than all the farmers levies paid up drought, flood, fire, floating dollars, trade sanctions etc. labour reform OH&S micromanagement so bad, hand rails have to be installed in a wheelchair access woolshed in case national park wants the farm for a tourist enterprise to tell travellers what Australia **used to do** before the dingo was naturalised, the railway closed down, the trucks were priced out of existence there were no more shearers or dogmen because leg traps and shearing was declared "too cruel" by a little popsy university graduate raised on lentils in Bondi where there are drug related assaults and murders every other week.

Dingo massacring the industry across the nation is OK because scientists have declared the dingo naturalised creating a lifetime junket on the chaos and suffering from their wilderness weapon unrestrained dangerous and savage killer dog discreetly butchering in some remote gully said to be given natures blessing and the **farmers branded as feral, unwelcome interlopers**. Our commodity levies are paying for shearer training if the woolshed was made a safe place with a fenced off wool room and safety harnesses fitted to the truck driver and presser loading wool, soft lighting and calming music played to the shed staff and surviving sheep. Levies paying for dingo baits to round up the dogs escaping public managed conservation land and city water catchment or Kyoto forest reaping financial benefit for having dingo packs massacre the wildlife destroy farms and reduce the rabbit impact on the national park saving the government staff getting out of their vehicles or offices. Imagine a landholder getting a bluey for their rabbits and (s)he saying hang on I'll breed up the sheep dogs and fix the problem soon as long as the neighbours muster the stray dogs when the job is done! The neighbours levies spent on mustering mongrel dogs. Microchipped collared experimental dogs caught and let go to see where they end up on levy money.

National park state forest city water catchment special area declared rate exempt, no levies paid on water or tourism or compensation owing to neighbours for damages from stray killer dogs benefiting the water industry and pine plantations rate exempt and subsidised for reforestation of "*degraded agricultural land*" over run by killer dogs where the 700+mm rainfall is fully intercepted but sheep, beef, dairy producers are compelled at a stroke of a pen and without compensation to let 90% of their run off go and cop the drought down wind of the belching smelters, coal fired electricity air conditioning the office blocks and cement suburbs built over the market gardens and orchards, the poultry and pig farmers spied on by property developers for animal welfare breaches or accusations. Sent to the wall defending an animal cruelty charge or dust, spray drift, noise pollution claim. So where were the levy funded bodies defending the food miles and transport efficiencies here? Money taken from



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farmers over decades under false pretences for industry representation!

Water industry does not pay rates or levies to keep their weeds, their fires, their dingo on their land. Agricultural levies pay for research into weeds, dingo behaviour, not water or tourism sold vacated wilderness. Why aren't the tourists and water sellers levied to keep their vermin and fires on their land? Levy the political lobby groups confiscating farms, forests, fisheries for wilderness and tourism! Public land turned into public liability. The water reservoirs set up by irrigators and farmers now that water is sent off to town. No compensation to the farmer still levied and rated for land or water (s)he can't use as they wish. What means theft and misrepresentation? Legislation and regulation by vested interests? To maintain the bureaucracy doing the research, promotion, overseeing puts up the levies so the show can continue eating away at the capital for a future no one has defined or committed to. Enjoy the bounty and spend, legitimise by flash presentations, lies by omission, denial.

The farmers put off the station hand, infrastructure propped up another year someone goes off farm to get a job in the mines or packing super market shelves through the night and the farmer no longer qualifies to be a farmer according to the taxation office because the off farm income to subsidise the payment of levies, taxes, rates exceeds the farm income. Then there is the generous drought aid low interest loan to buy someone's failed crop turned into fodder when the rain or irrigation cut out, because the sheep cattle had to be fed rather than walk the roadsides or grazing leases because it was pointless paying the RLPB/LHPA/LLS system for over 100 years for some bureaucrat to declare walking stock a danger for motor vehicles the more recent interlopers on travel routes paved over and bitumenised where the biodiversity is waiting to be mowed or fertilised. The animal activists and native veg spy camera was watching farmers spend their last ever resources feeding the nation on their farm overdraft. Volunteer fire fighters called off to motor vehicle accidents in 3 feet of dry grass because when these farmers were drovers mowing roadsides they were hazards????? Not tax, rate and levy payers for decades paying for services not delivered for some very good philosophical reason generated by a hostile urban audience plugged into their TV and academic idles.

Entire universities, CSIRO and other institutions have greater opinions about what goes on in rural Australia because they have sort and received industry funding to research *environmentalist agendas* being totally disloyal and corrupt about use of those industry funds looking for innovation not sabotage of these industries on the basis of claimed animal cruelty or environmental impact declaring farmers unbelievable liars about their operations therefor creating a research opportunity seeking truth and animal justice, wedged in the food chain, ever asking questions and having insoluble problems sort in a perfect world.

Farmers cannot say get stuffed, no more levies because they are compulsorily acquired legally bound in legislation before commodity returns are seen by the farmer looking at glossy annual reports, if they are produced at all, through dusty bloodshot eyes after a 20 hour day fitted in between the off farm job and covering for the station hand no longer afforded because of workplace regulations. The many \$100000s spent in levies subsidising the lives of university experts irrelevant for the present needs of farmers and certainly no vision for how 140000 families are going to keep feeding an ever increasing influx of people covering the high rainfall zone and "*degraded cleared agricultural land*" with cement and bitumen dug off another farm closed down because someone flew over a piggery, poultry shed, orchard, dairy farm with a spy camera and went off to the TV editors for a fictitious interpretation of some one spraying the apples with foliar fertilizer, a flying fox was dying tangled up in the hail netting, the agricultural department was killing chooks with bird flu because no one was allowed to remove the wild ducks on the dam or the poultry shed. The levies are paid for just the same because we need more research as to how to cost effectively keep the wild ducks sitting on the storage dam and the poultry farmer install a water treatment works and still pay his levies for R&D industry innovation, the DPI to kill his chooks and bury them with a backhoe.



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Farmers might be able to vote once in the blue moon to increase the levies or not and if they are really keen spend time away from the farm contributing to agripolitics in some form sitting on boards or farmer lobby group social outlets dismissed by universities and levy beneficiaries in the Cooperative Research Centres spearing the duty statement between research promotion various government department staff having identity crisis as to who their masters are, muchless define a loyalty and interests perspective. Go along for the ride and finger food junkets.

All this sounds rather futile however I personally went to school, university for about 25 years sort employment to then observed the game of applying for industry funds. Like bees around a honey pot the researchers spun stories about how they would catch the eye of their mates and contacts vetting funding applications to access industry funds. Put on 'green,' 'sustainable,' 'climate change,' the latest international treaty **buzz word** with garnish. There was no amount of industry vision evident in widgets, gadgets or conscience about farmers working 24/7 to provide air tickets for the tea room flies to wing off to a far away country to talk dairy food or wool or meat to vegans in the tropics without fridges. What wonders did they come back with to stand the industry funding their overseas holiday? Zero to nothing tangible cost benefit in 99% of cases.

I personally worked for some years on a product for industry that I believed would be worthwhile for animal health, welfare, production efficiency, improved product assurance, signed all the secrecy agreements and 20+ years of industry funding later it was patented bought by a company selling far more antibiotics than vaccine and guess what the farmers lost 20+ years of multimillions of R&D at the stroke of a pen because of the lead in time the industry levies collectors had not made provision for who owned the technology if it arose or could have it made under contract here or overseas, the product made here or sold away advantaging world trade opponents. How come? The farmers were fleeced for decades and their research never realised after decades of keeping a string of staff on good pay until they retired. The industry deregulated and all was forgotten. Antibiotics sprinkled through the food at vast and increasing expense and the patent office closed down the innovation because it advantaged the service industry not the farmers kept paying for food contaminants, selling off productive cattle before their time, because the alternative was taken and buried. It is worse than playing the poker machines for levy paying farmers at least with poker machines there is some chance of a pay out.

What would the average farm look like if those farmers were spared paying levies, rates and most of the taxes, with interest, propping up unviable universities and bureaucracies, never returned to the food chain in any shape or service from government, academia or bureaucracy running the harvester over rural Australia and tipping the result down many black holes along the coast where the residents know the shops feed, water, clothe, house and employ them. Their money electronically turns up in the slot in a bank wall, or is swiped on a plastic card. Farmers are out there ruining the forest, the wilderness, the fishery, the tourist potential. Abused rural minority, pillaged for their innovation and capacity to keep compensating with social marginalisation.

The \$1000s a year paid in rates levies taxes would make a significant difference to the farms capacity to innovate change enterprises adopt some of the good ideas that have come of research. Farmers would have some time to think beyond survival past the low interest loan for drought aid we had to have down wind of the belching industrial mechanism subsidised by farmers frozen vegetation for 25+ years building the bonfire in aggressive scrub while in the high rainfall zone their levies have set up many lifestyle blockies on the old deregulated dairy farms now paddocks covered in fire weed surrounding the new yuppie mansion. Irrigation water sent off to the costal resort. No more timber mills or fishing trawlers. Funny money is made from subdivisions of what was farmland in the high rainfall zone. Over grown forests, with 'tourists' fed imported cardboard covered breadcrumbs. Proudly Australian packaged from imported produce. Weren't the payment of levies worthwhile?

Rates highly pay staff in the shires, the local land services and then there is no money left



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for the services so the staff spend their time justifying why there are no services. There are so few farmers left, services cannot be justified by economic rationalists, farmers should grade their own roads do their own research and development under the regulations and legislation outlining what they can't do. The commodity levies are paid to research and promotion that appears to have little or no impact on commodity returns or solving basic problems before the esoteric that cannot afford to be adopted. There is no defence from spurious and unrealistic claims, denial, accusations from so called lobby groups using a media beat up to access research funding streams chasing rainbows and theories dreamed up looking through the bottom of a wine glass at some far off resort. The desktop publisher works miracles with the research report amounting, to lies by omission telling the farmer their compulsory acquired levies are being well spent including the production and postage of the glossy magazine available on line in the future and posted off shore from an exotic resort.

The holiday, farm families could afford if they did not pay rates levies taxes and have a station hand look after the chooks and sheep dogs during the holiday getting to know the children and spouse again where farm families have been scattered to all points of the compass subsidising agriculture and compensating for lack of service paid for again and again. Rest assured the levy pays a bureaucrat to go and test the holiday destinations for the farmers forced to stay at home and cover the cost of the levies.

Compulsory levies are a disgrace in another wise free enterprise system.

The mates club hoards all the levies and bargains among university and research institutions contacts and dynasties for who gets the booty. As I said vision for the industries future does not seem to be a part of the programs or securing for the direct benefit of the industry and farm sector any realisation of the money spent. Farmers are not consulted or considered as the groupies decide what is good for the farm sector that parallels with their view of what is a good junket for the research applicant. Who is doing the auditing, viability studies, cost effective expenditure of that money remaining on farm or blown into the wind before the farmer decides if (s)he can afford it or supports what is going on. Accountability, transparency, affordability in my experience and observation enquiry are in desperate short supply. Pick a commodity and the details may vary but the common threads are like the same pantomime. As one researcher stood over a farmer recently and said you farmers owe us a living. I don't have to defend my research standard or relevance, it's my livelihood!!! Another told farmers it was "*in their best interest*" for their livelihoods to be experimented with as pest control budgets were siphoned off into R&D quarantining money for research only!!!!? Scientists merely claim they do not believe farmers or practitioners and that unfolds a new research opportunity. Keep the money flowing for policy failure and insoluble problems, chronic incompetence, fraud and corruption.

How to fix it? The country could die if there were no enquiring minds and some support technically. There needs to be a major change in attitude in regard to farmers, foresters, fishermen and the clandestine environmental animal welfare political lobby element festering among academia and bureaucracy. The political lobby and activists need to be publically declared and seen for what it is in engineering funding streams to buy rocking horses. Auditing needs to be done by peers among the farm sector. A small committed group in plain clothes and clear support processes for whistle blowers. Research and promotion outcomes scrutinised by genuinely independent industry representatives.

People working at universities and various research institutions have witnessed disingenuous activities seeking and utilising farmers levies and other public finance. This amounts to stealing from the hands that feed them including Australia in the national interest where 140000 farmers are trying to feed 23M people here and another 40 -60 million people overseas with sections of a not so helpful highly paid academic and political community confused about who their masters are. Undermining of industry goodwill, the fraudulent use of industry and public money, abuses of intellectual property, should attract significant penalties from individuals and institutions where whistle blowers are offered adequate protection and procedures to air their concerns without fear or favour. Abuse of "**commercial in confidence**" brands to provide a shield for secrecy and lack of



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accountability with how millions of dollars are disappeared and the ownership of any results. Entire industries can be slandered while individuals or institutions hide behind slander laws and official letterheads to make unfounded claims. The results for so called "research" never intended amounting to elaborate fraud.

Those researching in good faith will be encouraged. Those working transparently with the rural sector will be encouraged in extension. There is no excuse anymore for clandestine research groups. Commercial in confidence needs to be dealt with as a game to distance farmers or other players. An area for astute legislation and regulation to free up information flow and protect intellectual property as required. The commercial in confidence aspects protected but able to be talked about knowing there is legislative protection and defined ownership.

While the people building the woolshed now declared national park do not receive credit yet the photographer can copyright the image! Something is very wrong here. The deception and manipulation converting the sheep station to national park rate, levy, tax exempt does not get a mention either. Why did the farm family go bust with the cost of production where pay as you earn tax levies are winding up the thumb screws for no return in services or benefits. Theft and fraud in any other language. If wages, exceed the purse to provide the promised R&D or services then it is time to shut down the institution as *unviable*. Farmers are not in the business of running a sheltered workshop for otherwise unemployable university graduates too precious to be subjected to their own powers of innovation. Instead of flat rate levies perhaps they should be geared to capacity to pay or elective when farmers are aggrieved by the lack of returns. There is currently no rights of appeal or recourse for fraud or deception, waste, disloyalty. Farmers are geared to feeding people including themselves so why do they owe researchers a livelihood for working for the environmental activists lobby cult following no matter how invalid the theories are based on foreign dogma involving subsidised study tours overseas.

For the 10% or less genuine R&D why carry the 90% rouges you cannot deal with as minority rural sector? Dismissed as inconsequential political force. Electoral boundaries rejigged disruptive. "**Public serve us**" culture more intent on manipulating public assets to serve them first including privileged information trickled out into the lobby groups constructing commodity levy funding streams responding to media beat ups and sensational revelations needing farmers levies to respond to. What happened to public mischief laws? Then there are departmental groups grinding away at codes of conduct and regulation to tighten the straight jacket on farmers some more and doing nothing towards addressing the real concerns about whether farmers can stop their soil blowing away or feed their animals because they are paying all these levies to hostile bureaucrats making no connection with food in the shops with what happens on farm. The \$5+ billion of food thrown out, yearly because the cannery was shut down for OH&S reasons.

Farmers are over the zeal of subsidising massive indolent or at worst hostile disloyal bureaucracies made up of highly educated university graduates pumped by environmental lobbyists since kindergarten about how farmers, foresters, fishermen are ruining the wilderness. If this one attitude change could be started then many of the rorts and junkets bought with commodity levies would begin fixing themselves. In the meantime government could assist by putting frameworks in place to empower farmers to take charge of their own destiny before there are no farmers and Australia the lucky country goes hungry. There are no highly trained children willing to take on the farm being over run with weeds, fire fodder, dingo packs, chaos and hoons in 4WD wilderness adventures throwing empty grog bottles about among the abandoned open cut mine holes. Our Australian graduates worth anything are off regreening the deserts in other countries, aquaponics, permaculture, holistic grazing systems invented by farmers and gardeners declaring levy paid R&D irrelevant parasitism. People with an innovative bent are handicapped by the inertia of the system, the endemic culture and rip off attitude. I know of many good people that either were harassed and left or left R&D out of frustration because high performers are nobbled by the drones to make them



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look better. Yes this is the outcome of many in house restructures. Industry loses its good people and the deadwood remain. The 90% failures get rid of the 10 % relevant to unload them so the 90% look normal.

If this Senate enquiry can tidy up the compulsory levy system in Australia many farm families would be more than grateful. As an exscientists and researcher on levies paid for years hard work buried in the patent office where farmers were not privy to the negotiations I would like to see major changes or get rid of it. If the consumers want food, clothing, housing **they** start paying a greater share for the R&D farmers have been asked to do more and more of because those we paid and entrusted are not delivering. Not representing the industry or societies, the nations, best interest in too many cases. Our farms and families are suffering. No one will share the reasons why our costs of production are excessive as. We are no longer prepared to take the blame for the less than perfect circumstance for our soil, water, animals, wildlife, vegetation on our farms, stretched further, neglected to support and subsidise expanding bureaucracies not held to account for squander, waste if not blatant treachery subsidising their own agendas of self interest and advancement.

It is clear that many research operations attracting commodity and industry levies are born of answering spurious unsubstantiated claims of environmental impact and breaches of animal welfare ethics. Creating careers and redirection of resources away from production efficiencies, innovations, resources improving farming and food quality under scrutiny. There is limited research that has had positive effects on the food chain that has come of distractive unsubstantiated claims and negative press often delivered through activism associations whose memberships are not disclosed. Resources misappropriated due to misinformation leading to research used to temper public concerns which may have been initiated by the very beneficiaries of funding streams the adverse publicity attracts.

Farmers pay fuel and transport both ways, shire rates for less road work, in the order of 11+% of their income to subsidise a charity for universities to champion environmentalism agendas. Produce food for below cost of production in soils and other inputs. If in a good year you pay income tax and pay off some of the low interest loan for drought aid on the farm overdraft not acting as the superannuation the rest of society can look forward to a retirement. There are no doctors or facilities in the bush so farmers die on the job. Declared uneducated because they had to sleep on the school bus. Telstra was privatised and the nest egg for remote communication education, banking, marketing dispersed into the coffers of grinning Australia. Tree planting extravaganzas in wheat paddocks for yuppies offsetting city transport and energy inefficiencies. Farmers coerced into getting three tree seedlings grown from seed collected off their TSRs in exchange for 2 kilometres of fencing tree breaks and a farm plan paid for aerial photograph paid for by their levies. Decommission 10% of their cropping areas with questionable returns immediate to long term fire hazard and rabbit harbour. How many times do farmers have to pay?

Rural minorities paid for the telephone calls at vast expense for decades promised new technologies not tree planting careers for unemployed yuppies, they had no say about privatisation and setting up the vegetation police in the form of catchment management authorities working for the water salesmen breeding naturalised dingoes to flood onto the farm massacring wildlife and domestic animals. Farmers blamed publically for 'no habitat.' Bureaucrats research denying them access to effective traps and poisons researching on farm levies. The veg police working for Kyoto international treaty signed off on Australia's behalf and without consultation giving away farmers vegetation rights at the stroke of a pen. Taking control of the Travelling Stock Routes because they are biodiversity corridors and the drovers and animals not given any credit for their 100+ years of rates and good management confiscated by the gang green committee junkies looking for more experimental grounds for universities, removing biodiversity to sell back through the greening junkets. Do the drovers get reimbursed for being dispossessed? Does the biodiversity die off like it has in the old grazing leases starved, butchered, burned as a consequence of 'salvation.' No one has a follow up audit of how



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biodiversity likes being buried in weeds and 3 foot of dry grass or piles of toxic gum leaves. Where is the compensation for the 100M tonne CO2e annually moved from farmers pockets NSW QLD cropping belt frozen vegetation by stealth contracted offsets to foreign owned industry, smelters electricity open cut mines fuel utilities. On the brew farmers pay levies taxes rates as a top up.

This Senate Committee has a challenge ahead but a very good subject which may lead to the banishment of commodity levies as being unviable, too subject to fraud and corruption. The only way to deal with it is kill it. Keep the money on farm. If nothing the farm family might be able to have a holiday to get to know each other again. Pay off the farm overdraft and low interest drought loan. Take the financial pressure off farm families. May be they can put up a dingo fence and dig out a few weeds. Dream about enacting innovation.

Over the years it has been observed that various parties conducting "research" on industry levies have achieved early retirement or are rewarded by generous packages that were spent on so called unviable farms sent to the wall in part from paying levies and being declared uncompetitive, lacking in innovation, restructured by the experts buying the farms for a lifestyle retreat. Mansions on the old dairy farms now growing unopposed fireweed, growing up to the historical rusted abandoned dairy parlour.

Farmers wonder what many researchers have contributed for their lifetime, generously paid levies and overseeing the demise of the industry and many farms. Not only have for example farmers in NSW had a long standing Minister for agriculture, mines and forestry that has been asked to appear in front of ICAC with some revelations but while in government offered no favours during 12+ years of drought and crisis while farmers fed Australia on their farm overdraft and farmers were in turn fed to packs of wild dogs their levies are now spent to muster as they escape public land including state forests and mine sites. At east 2 ex premiers have acted are acting as patrons to environmental lobby groups publically prodingo and are in the process of soaking multimillions of farmers levies and resources into the research of dog mobility by satellite and then there are no budgets left for on ground work once farmers and professional pest controllers claims are confirmed as true some years hence and the dog front has moved on, making the research irrelevant and a time waste requiring massive budgets to reel back *if* the will was there. Farm families sent to the wall and rescued by the Dunphy fund buying their conservation land at bargain prices to expand the dingo nation and endangered species business as more wildlife colonies feed and breed dingo delivering the no graze policies in wilderness.

As the problems gets worse over greater areas more farmers lobby for more resources once again hijacked for researching the insoluble problem and government provided with bad advice that does not address or fix the problem. Amounting to farmers levies being chronically misappropriated and producing fat cats and dogs and doing nothing for the 2.2 million Australians declared hungry and half of those are children of single income families, the working poor. We have ex political figures and ex journalists entering politics to save the dingo their naturalised wilderness weapon clearly given more rights than these hungry people including children here and overseas. Are farmers compulsorily acquired levies being well spent on matters of environmentalism and in this case animal welfare issues of dog attack wildlife and domestic animal massacres and brutality are edited out of the circumstances declaring trivial massacres and disruption dismissed as "*natural.*" Farmers repeatedly told "Dingoes were here before sheep." Hungry children apparently have no rights or representation in responsible governance compared to the naturalised Asian dingo given the freedom of the Australian mainland at the cost of wildlife, environment, water and food security, public risk down wind of ungrazed vegetation, city water catchment, carbon off set, tourist destination!

Helicopters in wilderness suppressing wildfire in old, once biodiverse fire safe largely vermin free grazing leases is also deemed natural and apparently free of human intervention according to members of city bushwalking and university ski clubs disliking farmers or their animals unless served up with bread rolls, side salad, fruit platter, wine cheese and rice at a



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resort function conference paid for by levies to discuss farm impacts on bioregions, Gondwana links, Greater Eastern Rangers initiatives dingo and bushfire speedways across the nation marginalising more farmers whose activities ruin a good wilderness and commercial tourist potential for urban majorities removed from how their food gets to the outlets. Far better that foreign owned farms or floating fishing factories visit and sell food back to the Australian people if they see fit to those visiting a tourist resort in an old timber town locked up wilderness waiting for the uncontrollable inferno to hit. At least they will be rate and levy exempt. Economic rationalists declaring Australian farmers uncompetitive, costs of production too high as they are forced to support increasing layers of bureaucracy, academia and micromanagement policing what they cannot do. Levies paying for the interdepartmental report on industry inefficiencies. The fisheries shut down to enhance recreational fishing 'hunters and gatherers' on massive retirement and redundancy packages. Grey nomads touring the national parks rate and levy exempt, while visitors looking for the biodiversity including viewing abandoned woolsheds where rangers in uniform explain what Australia used to do before it was saved from grazing, timber getting, cool burning to enhance biodiversity.

The more I see I believe there is little hope to salvage the functional aspects of levies. The dysfunctional is now in the unethical majority and lethal injection and intervention is perhaps the only solution for farmers looking to survive the parasites in bureaucracy making a lifestyle of roting a hard working rural minority good for a few more dollars after a media blackmail all the qualities of fairy tale drama. Wedging a few more friends into the food chain at the cost of the farm. China has a program where scientists are compelled to go and work on farms for a proportion of the year variously as labour as instruction. This program has merit for various aspects of R&D where farm innovation is the focus. Promotion might include other agribusiness aspects. Currently levies are not coming anywhere near potential or cost benefit. If they disappeared tomorrow would they be missed, would the farm sector benefit from the extra cash. I think the answers are **no they would not be missed** now or into the future for contributions and **yes farms could do with all the returns they can** to see them spend as the need or wish. For all the innovations they cannot enact because they are subsidising deadwood. Entire institutions misappropriating public money and justifying it.

While scientists can wave their arm and say we do not believe farmers integrity in reporting variously, more and more farmers are losing faith in so called science as the knowledge or action replacer in a less than ideal world. Credibility is sliding because of shonky operations and bad outcomes for values farm communities have held dear. Tidy order of weeds, pests, fire risk being some values experts have overseen going to 'hell in a hand basket' with their over supply of legislation, regulation, OH&S circus constraining and legitimising doing nothing. The levies, rates, taxes don't cover the cost.

The bottom line for farmers they are seeing less and less benefit or relevance from these levies. Representation and problem solving often goes back to the farmers when the wheel comes off as it has with live export fiasco. Farmers try to deal with the cattle over supply with less and less options taken away grazing leases travelling stock routes irrigation for pasture or fodder on and on it goes. City bureaucrats invariably have opinions well in excess of their credentials or experiences to pass judgement.

If the Senate can tidy up compulsory commodity levy payment such farmers can have more say in how these levies are collected and directed or in fact terminated then many farm families would be supportive. Kept on farm these funds are likely to be put to better use.

Many thanks for the opportunity for me to explore these matters long since been my concerns from many aspects as a farmer, scientist researcher and someone that was forced to rub shoulders with what I saw as a very disloyal bunch of people squandering hard won industry earnings. I also witnessed the process of restructure from various large losses in funding and I and others believed industry was the long term loser of these internally run downsizing operations. Good people always have another job to go to and deadwood floats



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to the top. If you would like me to discuss under parliamentary privilege more of these aspects then I am willing to do so. I would like feedback on this enquiries findings including what is more of a narrative submission overviewing what are concerns I and I know other levy payers and researchers share. Congratulations on the initiative in holding this enquiry. It is long overdue.

Areas to look at are resource wastage before and after funding. Farmers ability to set the level of funding or levy % or flat rate is often problematical. The audited finances are subjected to enervative accounting and glossy presentations if at all made available. Mostly well buried online for those farmers without internet access. Input from such as NFF or NSWFF, Agforce, VFF etc. are representative of perhaps 10% of levy payers. When an industry is in crisis these levy recipients seem generally to be missing in action and the rural sector fixes their own problem or makes their own representation once again. Stretch the rubber band another increment.

Noeline Franklin

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Terms of reference

- a. an audit of reports, inquiries and reviews relevant to this inquiry;
- b. the basis on which levies are imposed, collected and used;
- c. competing pressures for finite R&D funds;
- d. the opportunities levy payers have to influence the investment of the levies;
- e. the opportunities levy payers have to approve and reapprove the imposition of levies;
- f. the transformation of R&D and marketing into increased returns at the farm gate, including the effectiveness of extension systems;
- g. collaboration on research to benefit multiple industry and research sectors;
- h. industry governance arrangements, consultation and reporting frameworks; and
- i. any other related matter.