

3rd November, 2008.

The Productivity Commission,
Australian Government,
Locked Bag 2,
Collins Street East,
MELBOURNE. VICT. 8003.

SUBMISSION - INQUIRY INTO DROUGHT RELIEF. (CLIMATE CHANGE)

As an elder aged 81, who worked for C.S.I.R.O. Division of Plant Industry until my marriage to a cattle farmer in 1952 living at the catchment headwaters of the Brisbane River, and having been fortunate to travel world-wide sometimes with Angus Cattle Forums and International Park Tours, I submitted the enclosed TOPICS to the AUSTRALIA 2020 SUMMIT internet:-

- No.6. "The Future of the Australian Economy"(which since 1973 has shown a decline in the returns to farmers and the decline in rural population.)
No.7. "Population, Sustainability, Climate Change & Water."
No.8. "Future Directions for Rural Industries and Rural Communities".

In support of these Submissions - which have a direct implication to sustainability of the land base of our country - the National Estate - I attach papers as follows:-

- Dec.2001. "Regenerative Land Management" - Dr.Christine Jones
Apr.2002. "Redesign' for Soil, Habitat& Biodiversity. Lessons from Ecological Agriculture & Social Ecology - " Professor Stiert B.Hill.
2004. "Sustainable Silva-Pastoral System".
Oct.2006. "Carbon & Catchments" Dr.Christine Jones.
18/5/2007. "Future Directions of NRM Management" V.Burnett.
21/10/2008."Director of Federalism Project" V.Burnett.
25/10/2008."Climate Change Centre of Excellence" V.Burnett.

I would be grateful if you would consider these practical aspects of drought mitigation/climate control.

Yours truly,

(Mrs.)V.D.BURNETT.



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(please limit comments to 500 words per topic)

SUMMIT TOPICS FOR SUBMISSIONS #

The future of the Australian economy

The Australia 2020 Summit will examine ways to:

- a. After a long period of sustained economic growth and with the added benefits of the global mining boom, how do we best invest the proceeds of this prosperity to lay the foundations for future economic growth
- b. How we best prepare for a global economy that will increasingly be based upon advanced skills, advanced technology, low carbon energy sources and integration with global supply chains
- c. How we take advantage of Australia's proximity to the fast growing economies in the world
- d. How we boost public and private investment in economic infrastructure
- e. Foster innovation in the workplace; encouraging the transfer of ideas across businesses and economies.

"Goods, properties, possessions: these have usurped the place of contentment. No one could possibly belittle that self-respect that manifests itself in the making of **"AN ADEQUATE LIVING"**. (**) But an adequate living does not demand that all a man's heart and mind and soul be dedicated to the acquisition of mountainous possessions, more malignant trivia than ever was owned by a medieval prince.

For his happiness a man's house need not be large, and requires only a small garden behind it and a few trees. His children will not die from the lack of expensive carpets and gilded gew-gaws. But they will surely die – and our country with them – if they lack vision.

A human soul wants so little. It wants reverence and contemplative peace. It wants books and open spaces. It wants the free sky and the wild sun. It wants a little privacy and a little music. It wants to think of God.

The plain living and high thinking of our forbears has degenerated into a showy existence and absence of any thinking at all – which betray the born plebian, the born vulgarian. Is it possible we reached our maturity with Emerson and Thoreau? While countries grow industrially, they lose maturity." (**)

ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Inflation is governed by expectations. The **CONSUMER PRICE INDEX** encourages excessive consumption which is impossible to maintain in the finite world. The following figures support a return to the **COST OF LIVING INDEX** which existed until 1973 and was based on "needs" not "wants".

In order to restore Australia to a more egalitarian society and to keep a lid on inflation, the Australian Bureau of Statistics **ALL GROUPS CONSUMER PRICE INDEX** be modified or discontinued and be replaced with a **COST OF LIVING INDEX** based on actual increments.

Decline in rural profitability & production & population

<u>INDICATORS</u>	(*)	<u>CONTROLLED CAPITALISM</u>	<u>FREE MARKET ECONOMICS</u> (*)
		<u>To 1973</u>	<u>1983-1993</u>
Economic Growth (% real change GDP)		5%	3.3%
Unemployment (% labour force)		1.9%	8.6%
Inflation (% change CPI)		2.5%	5.7%
Av. Real Earnings (% change)		3.6%	-0.2%
Interest Rates (5-year bonds)		5.0%	11.5%
Current a/c Deficit (% GDP)		2.3%	4.5%

(*) Professor Matthews "Dialogues on Australia's Future".

(**) Charles Lamb – "An Adequate Living".

SUMMIT TOPICS FOR SUBMISSIONS #

Population, sustainability, climate change and water

The Australia 2020 Summit will examine:

- a. How Australia develops a long term plan to adapt to the growing impacts of climate change on our environment
- b. How does Australia best plan for its long-term water and energy needs
- c. How we position Australia to become a global leader within the next decade in the new low carbon technologies and industries
- d. How do we plan future population growth at a national and regional level, given the constraints of water shortages and sustainability.

On Page 10 it was emphasised we must first consider mankind's biology to build social capital. The capital wealth of land is closely linked to carbon levels in soil. No business can be sustained in the long-term without reinvesting in capital (i.e. by increasing carbon levels in the soil, not into the atmosphere to increase global warming).

The application of European farming methods to this fragile continent has degraded our land and rivers. This continent, with its variable rainfall, lack of snow and shallow ancient degraded soils under-laid with salt was originally quite productive due to the soil biota and humus content built up over millennia under the custodianship of the hunter-gatherer Australian aborigines.

The quality of life above the soil is determined by the appropriate management of soil biology in agricultural, horticultural, grazing and forestry areas; and is the most vital and most neglected of the natural resource issues facing Australia.

Reductions in the organic matter content, fertility, absorbency and water-holding capacity of Australian soils became evident within a few years of areas first being settled; and have continued (*) as agricultural and grazing practices have intensified.

Sustainable agricultural practices can be productive, profitable and restorative provided they:

1. **Regenerate, rather than sustain, the natural resource base**
2. **Enhance, rather than replace, natural ecosystem processes**
3. **Stimulate the formation of topsoil.**

Revitalising the natural resource base rekindles our sense of self and our sense of place in the environment; but economic and climatic stresses on landholders has forced them to mine not husband the land – the National Estate. It takes people to husband the land and mulch to feed it, thus feeding the **SOIL BIODIVERSITY (biota)** to produce **HUMUS** (the most valuable natural resource on earth – increasing fertility, carbon sequestration and moisture-holding capacity whilst allowing rainfall to penetrate to the aquifer to feed streams with clean water year round.)

The use of regenerative land management – rather than artificial fertilizers and chemicals – to control the movement of water, soil minerals, organic matter and animal dung to foster improvements in quality of soils, ground cover and water can only be achieved if profit and labour are available to stressed landholders.

References:

(*) Regenerative Land Management: a Whole of Landscape Approach
Dr Christine Jones, December, 2001 email: christinejones22@aol.com.au

See also attached 2020 Submission pages: Page 8 and Page 10

M. D. Burnett (001)

SUMMIT TOPICS FOR SUBMISSIONS #

(please limit comments to 500 words per topic)

Future directions for rural industries and rural communities

The Australia 2020 Summit will examine:

- a. What rural industries are best positioned to take advantage of the global consumer markets of the 21st century
- b. What options are possible for effective structural adjustment for rural industries and communities suffering the long term impact of climate change
- c. What is the most intelligent form of support the Government can provide to ensure the long term sustainability of rural and regional communities, including the fostering of the next generation of Australian farmers.

(a) Rural Industries based on perennial plants, native trees and organic farming methods (not based on depleting fertilizers or expensive chemicals or fuels) with more people engaged in husbanding the land – the National Estate.

(b) Adopt CSIRO "Eco-Graze" method for **LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY of the RANGELANDS** – the surplus pasture, manure and litter will mulch the soil surface, thereby minimising evaporation, erosion and excessive run-off whilst feeding the soil biota and penetration of surplus water to the aquifer to feed ground water and year-long stream flows and increase the carbon levels in the soil (eligibility for carbon sequestration).

Apply Queensland's "New Code applying to Native Forests Practice on Freehold Land" to all freehold and leasehold, wherein a limited number of non-commercial re-growth trees are regularly thinned to ensure less demand for water and to favour trees with better commercial potential – thereby protecting the soil resource from degradation by maintaining good pasture growth (under CSIRO Eco-Graze wet-spelling regime) thereby ensuring the land does not become unproductive from grazing or timber perspective, maintaining wildlife habitats, ground water and stream flows, drainage lines, wetlands and springs, and controlling salinity, erosion and evaporation.

Adopt sustainable remedies for **Agricultural Lands** to inspire **REAL CHANGE IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT** as outlined at "Defining the Science and the Practice" International Workshop on 31/10/2006 by Christine Jones in her comprehensive paper "Carbon & Catchments".

(c) "Agriculture is a special form of activity, not comparable in any way with trade and industry, owing partly to the nature and length of operations involved, and partly to the rate of yield on invested capital. The **FUTURE OF THE RURAL SOCIETY** (**) depends on: -

- Systems of agricultural credit be kept quite separate from normal commercial banking.
- Credit should be granted for a sufficiently long period commensurate with the length of the operation it is designed to facilitate.
- It should be granted at a **LOW RATE OF INTEREST.**"

(**) Lois Tardy, Director-General of France's National Agricultural Bank.