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Dr Neil Byron, Presiding Commissioner
ESD Inquiry
Productivity Commission, Locked Bag 2, Collins St East PO
MELBOURNE VIC 8003

Dear Dr Byron,

**Submission to the Inquiry into Ecologically Sustainable Development by
Commonwealth Departments and Agencies**

We welcome the announcement of the inquiry and the opportunity to contribute.

We would suggest that this inquiry also investigate the complexities of our Federal system and its positive/negative impacts on the implementation of the NSESD, particularly whereby ultimate responsibility can be easily avoided?

We would also inquire as to the impact of having voluntary compliance with the NSESD versus effectively compulsory compliance with the National Competition Policy. Are there, or not, any inherent conflicts between these two policies? Dr Steve Dovers from the ANU Centre for Resource & Environmental Studies would be a useful person with whom to pursue this line of inquiry (dovers@cres.anu.edu.au).

We would also suggest that from our experience of the Commonwealth institutions the most effective in grappling with the difficult issue of 'putting into practice' (by many leagues!) are the Land & Water Resources R&D Corporation and the Murray-Darling Basin Commission. Presumably, senior personnel from these organisations (eg. Dr Phil Price and Richard Price, LWRRDC; Don Blackmore and Scott Keyworth, MDBC) are being sought for their opinions and input to the inquiry.

Whilst acknowledging the relevance of ESD to all Commonwealth institutions, the 1998 revamping of the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services provides a particular opportunity for a department to lead the way in an increasingly active and explicit focus on ESD in Australia's rural and metropolitan regions.

For further detail of particularly critical issues for "sustainable regional development", I refer you to the submission to this inquiry from the national office of Greening Australia Limited.

There are even bigger picture issues than the implementation (or not!) of ESD by many parts of Commonwealth. Will this inquiry also outline some of the arguments relating to bigger questions such as the impact on Australia of various dominant economic paradigms, overall levels of resource consumption, population levels etc....?

Yours sincerely, =~

John Dore
Director