

The Bega Branch of the NSW Farmers Association wish to make the following submission to the Native Vegetation Inquiry:

- 1) the viability of many farming enterprises is being jeopardised through the introduction of increased regulation on native vegetation and biodiversity.
- 2) Although these regulations are being implemented to benefit the community as a whole, the farming sector has not been compensated and are therefore bearing a disproportionate financial burden.
- 3) Increased legislation and regulation has been implemented through all tiers of government. The limited education and resources of many farmers means that they are forced to either :
 - a) spend more money on consultants to ensure their systems are compliant with the changes in law; or
 - b) enter the grey area of non-compliance with the associated stress, worry and ultimately penalties.
- 4) Regulation has not been implemented in a cost effective manner. For example, local government is responsible for weeds and employ a number of rangers to inspect properties and issue notices. Vertebrate pests, such as rabbits, are controlled by the rural lands protection boards who once again employ a number of rangers to inspect properties and issue notices. Other issues are under the control of the Department of Agriculture which once again have their own staff to administer these functions. The staff of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Natural Resources has responsibility for other things such as irrigation water and catchment management.

The farming community would be better served by a single rural department with overall responsibility for agricultural issues.

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