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## WAFarmers Submission to: Climate Change in Western Australia – Issues Paper

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on Western Australia’s climate change policy.

The agricultural sector is acutely aware of climate change and because of the intergenerational nature of farm businesses, has a deep understanding of the need to plan and prepare for short, medium and long-term climate change.

We note the risks including less water availability and potentially longer, warmer and drier conditions, including the possibility of more frequent and more intense droughts.

We also note the risks to our economy of overreacting and being out of step with the steps taken by other G20 nations.

However, we are supportive of the government developing a coordinated state wide approach to climate change policy but the policy needs to be balanced and not skate over the costs of regulatory change, or ignore the ability of the market and innovation to address change.

The issues paper makes the claim that *“we don’t need to choose between reducing emissions and protecting our State’s economy and industries”* while WAFarmers would hope this is true it is hard to believe that it is possible to achieve the state governments goal of net zero emissions by 2050 without impacting the state’s economy and industries. We however welcome the inclusion of this statement as a core part of the States Climate Change Policy.

There are however real risks that the state government’s own goal of the state achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 could have unforeseen costs and consequences for our agricultural sector. Every effort should be made to model and understand the costs of any new carbon focused regulatory changes before they are implemented.



From a government perspective, approaches to address these issues should include:

- Funding an independent economic modelling think tank to provide economic information to key stakeholders to enhance the understanding of the costs and benefits of mitigation and adaption policies proposed by government (The Economic Regulatory Authority WA is a potential model).
- Support landholders to benefit from carbon capture opportunities with the development of robust measurement, accreditation and trading schemes.
- Supporting the identification, development and commercialisation of technology to increase the resilience of agricultural.
- Supporting research to enable adaptation to a changing climate, such as new crop varieties which can thrive in a hotter and drier areas.
- Support for drought farm management resilience support for farmers to plan the management of risk and if necessary, transition out of agriculture.

#### ENERGY

Agriculture (particularly horticulture) requires secure, reliable and competitive provision of energy. Government needs to be conscious and upfront with the impact of their policies on the cost and reliability of energy and the impact on future investment, productivity and employment in agriculture.

#### TRANSPORT

Agriculture relies heavily on transport - climate change planning should look to model the complete transport supply chain for agriculture with the aim of minimising its per tonne carbon emissions and costs. This will include minimum truck sizes, engine efficiency, road design and road sharing risk along with rail transport options.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE and ENGINEERING

While a changing climate will mean increased risks to major infrastructure due to events such as floods, storms, heatwaves and bushfires, any policy needs to factor in the ongoing improvements in design, engineering, technology and training. Many of these risks will be mitigated as we as a state and nation becoming increasingly wealthier and inherently more able to manage risks through engineering and technical solutions without overreacting with expensive new regulations.

#### SCIENCE

The cost to the Western Australian economy as a result of poorly informed decisions based around the 2050 goal could be significant. It is important that we understand the climate that Western Australia needs to adapt to, in order to ensure effective adaptation policies. This understanding needs to be based on peer reviewed science and not be driven by speculation.



Actions to address Western Australia's climate science information needs to include:

- Identifying whole-of-government climate science research priorities;
- Developing an overarching strategy for climate science research for Western Australia;
- Linking climate science research to economic impact modelling of the various policies;
- communicating results to communities, government, businesses and industry.

#### COSTS and BENEFITS

Western Australia now has an opportunity to show a considered and careful approach to climate change policy. While we note that the state government has committed to working with all sectors of the WA economy to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, this is unfortunately a policy that has been announced without a detailed understanding of the future costs and implications to the WA economy.

We believe that the government needs to establish a:

- Climate Change Metrological Modelling Authority to correlate the science and develop better long-term models of impacts on WA primary industries.
- Climate Economic Policy Modelling Authority to undertake cost benefit analysis of all policies that are developed that are aimed at achieving this target.

The one key policy that government needs is to depoliticise climate change and focus on considered policy development that exists outside the emotion and politics that unfortunately has become a hallmark of this debate.

Yours sincerely

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(Specific Answers to Questions are Attached.)

## ENERGY

► **What are the main challenges for decarbonising Western Australia's electricity supply while ensuring adequate generation capacity, security and reliability?**

Having a frank political discussion about the costs, benefits and risks of all the energy alternatives with nothing left off the table.

► **What are the most effective ways to overcome these challenges by 2030?**

Market based solutions.

► **Should the electricity sector make a pro-rata (or greater) contribution to Australia's national greenhouse gas emission targets?**

No

► **How fast do you think the transition of the electricity sector should occur?**

At a speed to achieve no negative impacts on industry

► **What measures have been implemented by your business to lower energy use or emissions?**

Farmers have been expanding the scale of operations, bigger more efficient machinery

► **What exemptions should apply to trade-exposed sectors in reducing our emissions?**

100%

► **How can the Government of Western Australia foster clean industries and technology**

Remove impediments to industry profitability

► **What are the barriers to purchasing a low-emissions vehicle for your household or business?**

Cost, recharge sites, design, power.

► **What can be done to facilitate the uptake of electric and other low-emission vehicles in Western Australia?**

Nothing should be done, wait for the next generation.

► **How can we further encourage use of public transport and active transport, such as walking and cycling?**

Electronic Road tolls linked to car registration with mobile tracking. Free public transport in peak hour, better planning of high density living hubs, building govt office accommodation on central public transport routes in the CBD – Dept of Water !

► **How can we ensure that Western Australia isn't left behind in the transition to cleaner transportation?**

Tax and spend (not recommended)



► **How will climate change affect your regional community?**

Speed up the depopulation of the eastern wheatbelt, increase the population of the South West coastal.

► **What steps can we take to further enhance the resilience of our regions and our primary industries?**

Maximise their profitability. Profitable farm businesses can afford to invest in change.

► **How can we support the agricultural sector to participate in the low-carbon transition?**

Reduce costs of doing business, incentivize the update to Euro 6 engines by offering zero cost registration or rebates

► **What opportunities do carbon offset markets present for Western Australian land managers, including Aboriginal groups?**

Huge once we work out the metrics and who owns the carbon credits

► **What matters should the State Government take into account in developing a strategy for carbon farming in Western Australia?**

Land ownership, legal risks.

► **What are the main climate risks for your household or your community?**

Rainfall decline.

**What can be done to manage these risks?**

R and D in next generation grains and pastures

► **What are your biggest concerns about Western Australia's future climate?**

Rainfall patterns

► **What could be done to ensure your community is better prepared for possible climate impacts?**

R and D

► **What can we do to encourage Western Australians to use water more efficiently and adapt to a drying climate?**

Market signals

► **What are the best management options to deal with the water security implications of climate change for our agricultural sector?**

Long term water rights security to remove uncertainty.

► **What are the key barriers to improved energy efficiency for our built environment?**

The wealth of our community



► **What information or tools do you require to improve energy efficiency in your household or workplace?**

Credible independent agency testing and accrediting the claims of various products.

► **What energy efficiency standards or disclosure measures do you support for our homes and offices and the appliances we use in them?**

Australian Standards

► **How do you think climate change will affect the liveability of your neighbourhood or region?**

Minimal, we will adapt.

► **How can we improve the retention of vegetation, particularly tree canopy, in our cities and suburbs?**

Reduce the cost of water, mandate new urban developments plant trees, mandate water tanks linked to roof catchment on all house sales, link rates to trees.

► **What are the key climate risks for the primary industry or resources sectors?**

Drying warming climate.

► **Do you currently assess the impact of physical climate risks on your business, assets or infrastructure?**

Yes

► **Is there information which would assist you to do this better?**

Yes, a state based model mapping future climate change risks.

► **What are the best ways to enhance the resilience of public and private infrastructure?**

Engineering standards.

► **Can existing land use and biodiversity management practices be modified to reduce vulnerability and improve resilience?**

Yes, training and awareness and best practise examples.

► **Are there opportunities for new collaborations with landholders or communities to address climate risks and improve biodiversity outcomes?**

Limited, better to let the market drive these outcomes.

► **Are there gaps in the availability of adaptation knowledge, climate information or skills for your community, organisation or sector? How can these be addressed?**

Yes. Government funding for independent non-government peer reviewed research and advice.



► **What are the main barriers to the adoption of effective climate change adaptation?**

Scepticism - because of the politicisation of the climate change debate and the failure of past modelling to reach forecasts.

Profitability of the private sector to fund changes.

Lack of a cost-effective technological solutions

Fear of the costs of government-imposed regulations.

Failure to embrace all options including nuclear and GM.