

**National
Farmers
Federation**

House of Assembly Select Committee on Commonwealth Decisions on Agricultural Land

October 2026



The National Farmers' Federation (NFF) is the voice of Australian farmers.

The NFF was established in 1979 as the national peak body representing farmers and more broadly, agriculture across Australia. The NFF's membership comprises all of Australia's major agricultural commodities across the breadth and the length of the supply chain.

Operating under a federated structure, individual farmers join their respective state farm organisation and/or national commodity council. These organisations form the NFF.

The NFF represents Australian agriculture on national and foreign policy issues including workplace relations, trade, and natural resource management. Our members complement this work through the delivery of direct 'grass roots' member services as well as state-based policy and commodity-specific interests.

NFF Member Organisations



08 October 2026

The Secretary
Select Committee on Commonwealth Decisions on Agricultural Land
Parliament of Tasmania
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000

Via Email: agland@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Secretary,

RE: House of Assembly Select Committee on Commonwealth Decisions on Agricultural Land

The *National Farmers' Federation* (NFF) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the *House of Assembly Select Committee on Commonwealth Decisions on Agricultural Land*.

In NFF's view, the Rushy Lagoon transaction has exposed a failure in Commonwealth process that warrants closer scrutiny. Legitimate questions remain about whether agricultural and broader community interests were properly considered through the relevant funding and approval processes. Concerns have also been raised about whether prospective purchasers may have been disadvantaged and whether potential conflicts of interest were identified and managed as necessary. Irrespective of the ultimate land-use decision, these issues have affected confidence and trust in the integrity of the decision-making process and demonstrated the need for stronger safeguards and potential reform.

Of particular concern is the use of *Clean Energy Finance Corporation* (CEFC) finance to support the acquisition of Rushy Lagoon which has attracted significant concern across the sector. Agricultural land is a strategic national asset that underpins Australia's food and fibre production, export industries, regional communities, and long-term food security. While the CEFC has an important role to play in supporting Australia's transition to a low-emissions economy, the use of public finance to support the acquisition and transformation of a significant agricultural property in the face of strong local opposition and perceived conflicts of interest has raised legitimate questions about the adequacy of investment decisions involving agricultural land.

The transaction therefore provides a strong basis for reviewing the CEFC *Investment Mandate* to ensure investments appropriately balance emissions reduction objectives with food security, agricultural productivity and good community outcomes. The key failure in our view is the lack of capacity to support small- and medium-scale enterprises, even collectively, through the CEFC.

More broadly, the CEFC *Investment Mandate* should be considered in terms of whether it is appropriately designed to support practical greenhouse gas emissions reduction and biodiversity enhancement opportunities within agriculture itself and especially for small- and medium-scale producers. This could include grants or other support mechanisms for projects that may not otherwise proceed and occur. The opportunity for on ground outcomes for agriculture appears repeatedly bedevilled by the limitations within the scope of CEFC, including scale and style of (co) investment.

Separate from the CEFC financing arrangements, information subsequently released concerning the *Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) Scheme* assessment of the Rushy Lagoon project also warrants scrutiny. The proposed project covers approximately 21,723 Ha of land used for dairy and beef production. The *Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES)* assessment identified that the reported livestock numbers represented approximately 4.52% of dairy cattle and 4.65% of beef cattle in the Scottsdale-Bridport region. Despite the potential loss of this production, the Commonwealth considered the impact minimal and decided not to make an adverse impact finding.

The released material does not, however, clearly identify the materiality threshold applied to that assessment, including the level of reduction in agricultural production that would be considered sufficiently significant to warrant an adverse impact finding. Nor is it clear that the assessment methodology adequately captured broader agricultural and regional effects, including cumulative impacts. The reliance on proponent-supplied production estimates further raises the question of whether sufficient independent verification was undertaken.

Taken together, these matters point to deficiencies in the transparency and safeguards applying to Commonwealth investment and approval decisions affecting agricultural land. We urge the Select Committee to recommend a Review of the CEFC *Investment Mandate* including whether it appropriately accounts for agricultural productivity, food security, and regional economic impacts, and provides adequate safeguards where substantial agricultural assets are involved.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact Warwick Ragg, General Manager, Natural Resource Management, via e-mail: WRagg@nff.org.au in the first instance to progress this discussion.



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Leading
Australian
Agriculture

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