

# The Institute of Foresters of Australia

ABN 48 083 197 586



PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

8 October 2010

Dear Prime Minister Gillard,

## **Increasing native vegetation into parts of the previously cleared Agricultural landscape**

Australia desperately needs to increase native vegetation in many parts of the previously cleared agricultural landscape. This is required for carbon sequestration, biodiversity value and, if done correctly, to sustainably produce local timbers. Moreover, properly integrated revegetation projects in addition to the many economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits, can enhance ties between town and country.

Landcare, Greening Australia, Greenfleet and other groups run numerous small-scale works, and some larger regional programs, and many individuals have a vision that much larger integrated plantings would improve our farming landscapes.

An Institute of Foresters of Australia forum on 18 August brought together professional foresters, landowners and land managers to explore practical and organizational options to achieve this goal. This forum urged immediate government commitment to action.

We recognise with some satisfaction that major political parties are at last saying they will increase carbon sequestration in Australia by better managing and by increasing forests and woodlands on private land. These policy outlines, however, must be followed by real action, funding and coordination.

We therefore call for the following:

- Allocating substantial funds to an Australia-wide project to establish thousands of hectares of new forest and woodland on private land, especially in the Murray-Darling Basin, over the next decade. We note the Green Corridors plan although there is a lack of detail as to its practical implementation.

- Implementing a regional program through municipalities, Landcare, Greening Australia, GreenFleet, land management networks, Catchment Management Authorities and the many other groups working directly with landowners
- Technical support (training, facilitation, research, carbon accounting, mapping, public relations) to be provided by a central NGO (perhaps an Australian Community Revegetation Corporation to bring together the currently rather dispersed revegetators), with the capacity to raise corporate and philanthropic funds, share income with landowners and reinvest profits in further revegetation
- Advisory, rather than operational, roles for government natural resource departments
- Commencement of pilot projects in 2011 to demonstrate practical action being implemented and so we do not lose a further year of revegetation opportunities.

We look forward to your response and we will be conducting a follow-up forum in the coming months to further progress ideas. We would welcome a representative of your party participating.

Yours sincerely



Michael Ryan  
Victorian Chair  
Institute of Foresters of Australia

CC:  
Mr Tony Abbott Leader Opposition Leader,  
Dr Bob Brown Leader Greens



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**



REF: MNMC2010-11279

Mr Michael Ryan  
Victorian Chair  
Institute of Foresters of Australia  
PO Box 7002  
YARRALUMLA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Ryan

Thank you for your letter of 8 October 2010 to the Prime Minister, the Hon. Julia Gillard MP, about increasing native vegetation in previously cleared agricultural landscapes. Your letter was forwarded to the Hon. Joe Ludwig MP, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, as the matters you raise fall within his portfolio responsibilities. Minister Ludwig has asked me to reply on his behalf.

The Australian Government recognises that trees and other vegetation on- and off-farm can improve the resilience of farming systems and provide soil, carbon, water quality and biodiversity benefits. The actions called for by the Institute of Foresters of Australia are consistent with current government programs.

Through Caring for our Country the government is helping farmers to adopt management practices that increase ground cover and soil carbon and improve soil condition. Farmers are also being assisted to improve landscape-scale conservation and to adopt arrangements such as stewardship, covenanting and property management plans for the on-farm management of trees and other vegetation. Caring for our Country provides support for regional natural resource management organisations, community groups and others to deliver on-ground works and to improve knowledge, skills and technical advice to land managers.

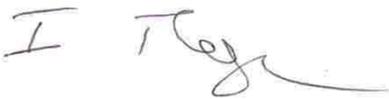
The government has also recently announced the investment of \$45.6 million over four years (2010–11 to 2013–14) in the Carbon Farming Initiative to help farmers enter the carbon market. The initiative centres on providing farmers with the knowledge, capacity and confidence to generate and benefit from carbon credits. This will prepare farmers and landholders for a potential new income stream while also improving essential ecosystem services and reducing Australia's greenhouse gas emissions.

You refer to the National Green Corridors Plan in your letter. The government is committed to investing \$10 million over three years towards its development, to prepare our native plants and animals and our agricultural landscapes for climate change. As part of this investment, a National Green Corridors Advisory Group will be formed, to assist in the development of a draft plan. Members of the group will include scientists, farmers, Indigenous groups and regional natural resource management bodies.

The government also supports the expansion of reforestation and plantations through its Plantations for Australia: the 2020 Vision initiative, and recognises that forest plantations provide a range of benefits, including sequestering carbon, preventing salinity and creating a sustainable timber resource for harvesting and conversion into wood products.

Thank you again for bringing your concerns to the government's attention. I am interested in hearing the outcomes of the Institute of Foresters follow-up forum to be held in the near future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I Thompson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ian Thompson  
Executive Manager  
Sustainable Resource Management

11 November 2010