

15 March 2017



Senate Standing Committees on Finance and Public Administration  
Via email: [fpa.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:fpa.sen@aph.gov.au)

**Re: Senate Inquiry regarding the operation, effectiveness, and consequences of the  
*Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Location of Corporate  
Commonwealth Entities) Order 2016***

The National Farmers' Federation (NFF) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate inquiry regarding the operation, effectiveness, and consequences of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Location of Corporate Commonwealth Entities) Order 2016*. The NFF is the peak national body representing farmers and, more broadly, agriculture across Australia. Operating under a federated structure, individual farmers join their respective state farm organisation and/or national commodity council. These organisations collectively form the NFF.

Farmers are the strongest advocates for living outside of a city – it is where we do our business. We understand that living in regional and rural locations offers many lifestyle benefits and we must continue to work to ensure these communities remain strong and vibrant. Therefore, the NFF supports the intent of initiatives designed to strengthen rural and regional communities through relocating Government agencies to regional areas, thus creating jobs and providing financial injections to rural economies.

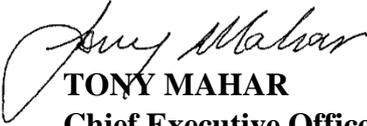
We agree that regional Australia deserves its fair share of government services and opportunities. However, we are also conscious that some jobs are best done in the cities. Because of this, NFF supports the relocation of Government agencies to regional Australia where there is a net overall benefit, it is practical, is the best fit for the region and has a positive impact not just on the individual region but on agricultural productivity as a whole. There must also be adequate allowance in federal budgets for relocation and relocations costs – these costs must not be drawn from the day-to-day costs of agencies.

The strength of the agricultural sector itself also underpins the strength of regional communities. It is critical that the relocation of an agency does not result in ongoing disadvantage to the sector. For example, the NFF continues to have reservations that the relocation of the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) will have a negative impact on services, performance and business continuity. If current rates of approval of agvet chemicals decline, Australian farmers will be at a disadvantage in the global market place by not being able to access state-of-the-art agvet chemicals, thus being unable to

benefit from the on-farm productivity and efficiency gains that could be realised by using said chemicals. This is, and remains a major concern to the farming/agricultural sector.

To be clear, the NFF strongly supports growing a vibrant rural and regional Australia. Notwithstanding this, a comprehensive analysis of the impacts, including clear reporting of the costs and benefits, of the relocation of any government agency on farmers and agribusinesses across the nation is needed to safeguard agricultural productivity instead of solely focusing on the positive impacts of relocation on the region the agency is relocated to.

For further information please contact:

  
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