



Media Release

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Australia's first Blueprint for the future of food and fibre

Ensuring the Australian agriculture sector is a world leader in providing high quality food and fibre into the future is the goal of the Blueprint for Australian Agriculture – the first industry-developed plan for the future of Australia's farm sector.

Launched in Canberra today by the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) and the Blueprint partners, the Blueprint is the first plan for the future of the sector developed by the sector, and identifies the seven key areas which underpin the future success of agriculture in Australia.

"The Blueprint sets out the steps for the agricultural sector to take to ensure we have a strong future ahead. It has been developed as a result of input from almost 4,000 people across the agricultural sector, who identified the key challenges, opportunities and potential solutions to the issues we face," NFF President Jock Laurie said.

"It is an ambitious plan that identifies seven critical areas in which action must happen now to ensure we are well placed in the future: Innovation, Research, Development and Extension; Competitiveness; Trade and Market Access; People; Agriculture in Society; Natural Resources and Transformational Issues.

"The Blueprint participants have called for such action as an increase in investment in agricultural RD&E to help improve productivity growth and address issues like the changing climate. This is long overdue, with investment in rural R&D stagnating since the mid-1970s.

"They also wish to see upgrades in critical infrastructure and a reduction in red tape to help the sector remain competitive and the completion of key free trade (FTA) agreements, like the Korean FTA, to secure our market access.

"The inclusion of agriculture in the national school curriculum is considered a priority by the participants, to help build greater understanding of agriculture and encourage more students to seek careers in the sector. And the need to build strong, positive relationships with the wider community is seen as critical, underpinning much of our future success.

"Ensuring environmental sustainability is improved, promoted and rewarded right across the sector has emerged as a key opportunity, along with improving preparedness for extreme climatic events, like the bushfires and floods we have seen across five Australian states in the past month.

"And making sure the agricultural sector is well placed to respond to future uncertainties is a key component of the Blueprint, ensuring the sector remains diverse, resilient and adaptive to change," Mr Laurie said.

The Blueprint for Australian Agriculture is available to download at www.nff.org.au/blueprint. The Blueprint is an initiative of the NFF, in conjunction with Westpac, Woolworths and DAFF. In 2013, the NFF will conduct a series of forums, designed to bring the agricultural sector together to drive the Blueprint forward. The Blueprint legacy phase is supported by major partners Westpac, Woolworths, Bayer CropScience and Syngenta Australia.

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