

Agribusiness Alert

Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper

December 2013

On 9 December 2013 the Federal Government announced that it has commissioned a White Paper to examine the competitiveness of Australia's agricultural industry.

The purpose of the paper is to outline a strategy to improve the competitiveness and profitability of the agricultural sector and boost its contribution to trade and economic growth. It will focus on improving productivity through innovation and the promotion of investment and jobs growth in the sector, and is intended to ensure that agriculture remains a significant contributor to the national economy and regional communities.

The commissioning of the White Paper is noteworthy against the background of the Treasurer's decision on 29 November 2013 to prohibit the proposed acquisition by Archer Daniels Midland Company of GrainCorp Limited under the *Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Act 1975*. That announcement was followed by further criticism by Senator Heffernan of the role of the ACCC in the approval process and his announcement that he plans to hold more hearings into the wheat market in early 2014, while the Opposition criticised the decision for its likely impact on future foreign investment decisions.

Terms of reference

The White Paper will address matters such as:

- food security in Australia;
- improving market returns at the farm gate;
- drought management;
- access to investment finance, farm debt levels and debt sustainability;
- the competitiveness of the agricultural sector;
- the effectiveness of regulations affecting the agricultural sector;
- opportunities for enhancing agricultural exports and new market access.

A complete copy of the terms of reference can be found [here](#).

How you can contribute

The White Paper will be developed in consultation with business, industry, experts and the community over the next six to twelve months.

- The government will release an issues paper in the coming weeks calling for public submissions.
- A Green Paper will then be released in the first half of 2014.
- Further public submissions on the Green Paper will be sought for the final White Paper.

We will be closely monitoring the progress of the White Paper and providing our agribusiness clients with updates as it develops and any assistance they may require through the consultative process.

If you would like further information or to discuss the process and your submission, please contact us.

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