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PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



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Clean Energy Package provides opportunity for regional Australia

The Clean Energy Package will direct a large flow of money to agriculture that will help make farming more profitable, as improved farming methods make land more productive according to the Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor.

At the same time, Mr Windsor believes that the exclusion from the carbon tax of fuels for cars, light commercial vehicles and heavy vehicles and fuels used in agriculture, fisheries and forestry will considerably reduce the impact of the carbon tax on farm input costs.

He is also pleased that the carbon tax also won't apply to emissions from agriculture.

Mr Windsor, along with fellow Independent Rob Oakeshott, has been the voice of the rural sector within the Multi-Party Climate Change Committee negotiating a package that helps farmers, while also encouraging the behavioural change needed to begin addressing climate change.

Key features of the package include:

- A 15% tax rebate on machinery used in no-till or direct-drill farming methods will not only assist in carbon sequestration but also helping to reduce the impact of drought. It also puts an extra \$37,500 in the pocket of a farmer who buys a \$250,000 machine.
- Direct funding to help farmers store more carbon in their soil, with a particular focus on new farming technologies, including biochar, biofuels and new crop/grazing species.
- Funding for research into the development of a system to measure the amount of carbon stored in soil.
- New agriculture industry jobs for carbon service providers, who'll help farmers obtain funding for projects that store carbon in soil.
- Funding to help control weeds, pests and feral animals.
- Funding for local Natural Resource Management organisations to guide reforestation and revegetation projects and develop climate change scenarios that'll help farmers adapt.
- Guidelines to prevent carbon forests from being established on existing agricultural land or from taking water from farms and other water users.
- An independent board to oversee these initiatives.

"For years, governments have treated the agriculture industry as a poor cousin. That's about to change.

"Now that farmers have been recognised as a key part of the effort to address climate change, the agriculture industry can look forward to better treatment through the programs associated with the package.

"These initiatives will drive improvements in the natural environment, while also increasing the carbon content of soil. That can only improve the productivity of farm land.

"I'm proud that my involvement in the Multi-Party Climate Change Committee has helped develop policy that will encourage farmers to innovate while also lowering our greenhouse gas emissions.

"I'd like to thank the members of the Multi-Party Climate Change Committee for their goodwill and their willingness to compromise in pursuit of an outcome all Australians can be proud of," Mr Windsor said.

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