

Supermarket Pricing Inquiry

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Madonna Waugh



Dear Committee ,

I realise the committee has terms of reference and my submission may veer off the terms of reference, but due to nearly all the jobs in agriculture are mostly labour intensive, body wrecking and low paid, I believe Australia has a very big problem with how they pay and appreciate the hardest work. But Australians have been promised that the hardest work needs to be done cheap to make sure household budgets don't suffer.

I have been growing horticulture products for 20 years. Actually 24 years. My husband was in the local council (low paid, body wrecking job in the weather) and I had a part time (low paid) job and raising kids and we both quit our low paid body wrecking jobs to grow labor intensive crops. Yeah... education levels are minimal in safe National party seats. Why would any human decide to take a career change from bad to worse?

Let national farmers federation explain what growing produce entails when they decide to identify what a farm worker has to endure.



Back when we first started growing produce, it was never in the public domain that horticulture farmers have to grow for cheap. I think that bizarre trend started when national farmers federation and coalition decided to deride Australians for not wanting to go do body wrecking , very low paid work for a few weeks. Dole bludgers will not go to a region for a few weeks for a few crumbs so that consumers can get cheap produce. It was a plan that If unproductive powerful people told consumers that if farmers can't get lazy dole bludgers to go to a region for body wrecking , so called unskilled , low paid work, then government could import slaves from developing countries To make sure consumers don't pay too much at the checkout. Australians like cheap food and expensive housing, so now we have modern slavery masked under convoluted visa programs.

As the national farmers federation also identified in 2022 press release, the pool of workers is slim pickings in the regions.

There is something really odd in Australia that the hardest, most productive body wrecking work that is done in the elements is the lowest paid. We pay unproductive politicians a very large welfare payment to deride us and implement policies that make the hardest workers pay the most slave tax. We have unproductive real estate agents making more money than me and they produce nothing. We have unproductive house flippers making more money than me. But it is my industry that has to supply cheap produce to save consumers at the checkout.

I am sure the committee can remember the backpacker tax fiasco that had to get fixed in a hurry? That fiasco saw imported low paid farm workers have their Keating superannuation taxed at 95% when they exited Australia. Keating superannuation is part of an Australians pay. But the national party saw fit to tax the most productive Lowest paid workers superannuation at nearly 100%.

A national party Mp for one of the poorest seats in the country went to the media to say that we won't go do unskilled lower-paid roles. What is an unskilled lower-paid Role? Why does a safe national party seat have ANY unskilled lower-paid roles after their 104 years? And why is a public funded , high paid, and unskilled politician deriding his fellow humans? What right does he have to decide who is unskilled and who is not. And why are productive people paid such low pay? Low paid , productive farm work is not unskilled. It is just a term politicians use to make poor people feel bad. But the National party Mp saw fit to pass stage 3 tax cuts where the hardest low paid workers pay more slave tax. How very sad that we pay a politician a large welfare payment to have such a dim view of his fellow humans. Let's call it poor shaming. It is a great vote winner for safe National party seats in uneducated retirement national party seats like widebay.



A local slaughter house that has received millions and millions in welfare payments from the federal treasury, also has a dim view of their fellow humans. I am not sure if National party backed slaughter house supplies to coles and Woolworths.

The slaughter house wants to build a slum to house 98 imported low paid workers under another trumped up convoluted Agvisa. The housing crisis was severe in Gympie way back in 2021 when the government backed slaughter house submitted to Gympie Regional council . The pay at the national party backed slaughter house was so low that the workers could not compete for housing with the highway bypass workers or the woolooga solar farm workers.



In the slaughter house submission to Gympie Regional council, the writer infers that the government handouts are limiting Nolan's attracting tax payers to do body wrecking, very low paid work for a family that has such low regard for their fellow humans.

A family that has received more government handouts than any other Gympie family is deriding their fellow humans for handouts.



We have never sold to Coles and Woolworths in our 24 years of growing beautiful cheap produce.

But the last 2 years has been a horror due to cost of production. And obviously bad weather has played a role in not making any money in a high cost, highly privatised country in an extreme inflationary environment. Everything to produce cheap produce is very expensive. Farming is unsustainable if farmers have to supply cheap in a high inflationary environment.

I am not sure why anyone is blaming Coles and Woolworths for the current mess that farmers find themselves in as not all horticulture farmers supply to Coles and Woolworths.

We did supply to a marketeer many years ago. The middle man wanted our produce cheap and put four times mark up for their Noosa Farmers Market. One lifestyle audit on the middleman would see the family explain all their luxury items they bought for cash.

It is a thing that farmers have to take many risks for months and months to get product from seed to picking and we are always expected to supply cheap and retailer is allowed to pop a huge mark up by just for putting it on a shelf. So there is a lot of greed in Australia and due to horticulture products having a very short shelf life, all retailers will just take advantage of our vulnerable position.

The national party did ask ACCC for an inquiry into fresh food and dairy supply chain few years ago and I can't recall there being a response from the National party!



David Littleproud responded to more work in this space in question time from Mrs Phillip.

Let me quote David!

I know those opposite wanted to have another ACCC inquiry into dairy. They don't need to because it only cost the Australian taxpayer \$2 million. But it seems they now want to take the advice on the dairy industry from Pauline Hanson and One Nation. They want a reregulated industry. That is frightening. That would be a reckless act that would destroy agriculture, not just the dairy industry. Those great reformers—Paul Keating and co—will be sitting in their chairs today watching question time— *(Time expired)*

David Littleproud did not want any more regulation and didn't want another 2 million dollar ACCC review. David lauded the freemarket, neo liberal, Paul Keating. You know as a farmer when the party for farmers lauds Paul Keating, you are in a whole world of hurt. Hard working horticulture farmers have no representation when the national party thinks the free market king Paul Keating is our answer.



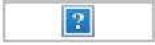
It's funny that David Littleproud is now concerned about the free market and reckons he has been calling for another ACCC review since NOVEMBER 2023, when he didn't want to spend 2 million back years ago.



Horticulture farmers have been done over for many decades. And David thinks November 2023 was the time that we have been hurt enough by supermarkets. Horticulture farmers are the only industry that is expected to be productive and supply cheap and help consumers at the checkout.



Recently on ABC 730, Woolworths CEO gave a response to say who is benefitting from Woolworths profit. The CEO has outlined that Paul Keating private age pensions are shareholders.



Will your committee be calling on Keating private age pensions to see how much profit they are enjoying?

One Paul Keating tax payer backed private age pension has 7,272,415 shares in Woolworths. That is only one of the many 50 billion pa, publicly backed private pensions that has shares in Woolworths. Private age pensions cost the federal budget 50 billion pa and growing every year and will soon cost more than the age pension.



The same Paul Keating private aged pension has 4,656,905 shares in Wesfarmers. So will the committee be asking these 50 billion pa publicly Backed private age pensions if they will be giving back some of the profit to horticulture farmers?

Will Paul Keating private age pensions supply us workers with an income while we are low paid farm workers , so we don't live in poverty while the government backed private age pensions exploit the unproductive share market?



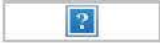
Recently Anthony Albanese acknowledged that farmers are supplying CHEAPER produce. What is a fair deal at the checkout?



Politicians don't use the word fair when we talk about housing! Politicians and the media don't say that landlords need to only charge a fair price to the renter.

How bizarre that a landlord likes to literally charge another human rent and then say they won't need an age pension. So a renter has to go to work to supply an age pension to an unproductive landlord. The landlords have negative gearing and tax concessions for risk, but the renter gets no tax concessions and can't claim their high rent against their heavily taxed

slave job.



There are many problems in horticulture sector and I am pretty sure it is not just coles and Woolworths.

Our peak agriculture body is always putting out press releases that farmers need 172000 imported tax payers to make sure households are not hit at weekly shop.

So for many decades our peak ag bodies continue to promote the idea that us horticulture farmers have to supply cheap produce .

No politician or ag body appreciates the labour intensive role that is a horticulture farm.

Consumers are not told that it takes 8 weeks to grow a green bean and that the cost to produce that bean and get it to market is at least \$6 to just cover cost of producing that bean!

Consumers are not told how long it takes to tend to garlic and it costs x amount to get it to market!

Consumers are not told that it takes at least 12-15 weeks to tend to capsicums.

For all these weeks horticulture farmers have to tend to crop and cross all your fingers and toes and hope the weather plays nice enough to make sure a product can be picked. And then consumers are told to expect us to supply cheap.



There is no ag body or politician in the public domain who are calling for housing to be CHEAP so that tax payers can afford a roof over your head . A house is unproductive , but it can be expensive.

There is no ag body or politician advocating for seed, fertiliser, chemicals, diesel, freight, energy and packaging to be cheap to make sure that horticulture farmers can continue to supply cheaper produce to help households during their weekly shop in a high cost country that cares more about unproductive housing going up by year. A house doesn't offer up anything to the economy, but has to be expensive so people feel rich and spend. Well housing is expensive and no one is spending on my beans. That is when I get beans to market. We just copped heavy rain and likely lose most of what is in the ground.

I recently rang Stephen Jones MP office to ask if there was a 50 billion pa publicly backed scheme for us to access to make sure we are not living in poverty while we grow cheap produce.

There is no scheme for workers to help with poverty before we retire. There is only a publicly backed scheme to make sure retirees do not retire in poverty in a rich developed country.

It is quite bizarre that so many people are concerned how I live if and when I retire from growing cheaper produce. But no one seems to care if I don't sleep and anxiety levels just get worse with every passing day that we have to take all the risks, be productive, hopefully get produce to picking stage and then be told to supply cheap. All I hear is how I need to supply the consumer with cheap produce to help at weekly shop and how we need a 50 billion pa public teat sucking private pension so people don't retire in poverty.

I am not sure how farmers do contracts with Coles and Woolworths, but a farmer would probably have to sign a contract to supply a certain amount of produce. That horticulture farmer would have to grow more than contracted to make sure farmer meets the contract with supermarket. So any residual produce will go onto the fresh market that I supply to. So inadvertently I will get less for my product if market is flooded. The market is flooded and has been for couple of years. No buyers and perfect weather. The current rain may suppress some items reaching market and let's hope some farmers get a decent amount for their toiling. Sadly if produce does go up a few cents, watch the politicians and consumers complaining.

As I recently explained to the Gympie regional council rates department, I am not a landlord who doesn't have to work to cover cost of a rental property. A government back landlord can ask a tax paying renter to cover all costs that a landlord incurs. I can not ask consumer for cost of production back to cover costs in a high inflation environment. Wayne the landlord can increase his rent to a tax paying renter due to his costs. Wayne will get tax concessions and the renter will get no tax concessions to help with their increasing costs.



I also asked Gympie regional Council rates department if they could do anything to make housing cheaper to help with consumers weekly budget.

I explained to the rates department that a babyboomer next door made 500000 in a few years without lifting a finger. Just flipped a house. Some poor soul has borrowed 650000 for a roof over their head and it is my beans that is cooking household budgets?

Local, state and federal governments all benefit out of house flippers and house prices going up every year, but it is my beans that is cooking household weekly budgets.

I am also a consumer and I have the same expenses as Wayne the landlord, but I am not a lazy landlord who expects a renter to pay him a wage and pay off his rental property. Then Wayne will want a renter to pay him a pension so he can say he is self funded. I am a productive horticulture farmer who has to operate in a high cost country, where house flippers and landlords are treated better than productive horticulture farmers. The anxiety levels get worse when you see all and sundry excited that house prices continuing to go up. But if labor intensive horticulture prices go up, the household weekly budget is in trouble .

If it is the labour intensive fruit and vegetables that is putting household budgets at risk, I think the economy is in a worse position than any job lucky, high paid , unskilled politician cares to admit.

It isn't my grocery bill that will send in the debt collectors. It is the power company, the Gympie regional council, our ag product supplier and the commonwealth bank. Of course

most of the above have to look after private age pensions, so banks and ag suppliers need to make sure private age pension funds are not out of pocket and make sure that bills are paid. Australians can't retire in poverty and that means society needs to pay high costs for profit gouging private age pensions. Commonwealth bank have a duty of care to make sure the profit they make is passed on to Paul Keating private age pensions.



Michael Guerin from AgForce Qld , recently put his view in the public domain. It could be an option, sell my property, put cash in bank, buy a caravan and tour oz looking for all the free stuff that councils offer rich babyboomers. I can be a pretend boomer. I will travel in small house on wheels, but not have the 3 rental properties to travel between.



The joy that local , state and federal governments and media get from high house prices is debilitating depressing and causing a lot of anxiety. The more house prices go up, the less money consumers have to buy fresh fruit and vegetables. How is high house prices a good thing ? These high land prices will limit future generations who may want to grow food. Let's hope no kiddies dare take on producing food. We are the only sector that is asked to supply cheap to help household weekly budgets. I suppose Australians do like cheap imported food, so maybe that will be a thing that will be in the future. All produce will be imported.

How does a young Australian borrow millions and millions of dollars and set up a farm to grow very cheap food?

Australian economy is in a mess thanks to 3 decades of building unearned wealth with tax concessions all in the name of the rich accumulating wealth through housing .

Australian economy and its politicians laud themselves while demeaning some of the hardest farm work. We are not worthy . We are unskilled and lesser of a human. We are low paid. We are not rich and therefore not deserving.



Australian economy digs stuff up, sells houses to each other and the federal government have a library of tax concessions to move wealth while the low paid are demeaned by calling them unskilled or low paid. Without us low paid peasants, the elite would have to do the hard work. Time to flip the economy, pay politicians the lowest wage and pay all the productive people the same wage as an unproductive politician.

There will always power imbalance in a capitalistic and poor shaming country like Australia. Australia has created a 50 billion pa public teat sucking private age pension. So we will pay high prices for everything so that private age pensions can get their 10% growth year in year out. Whether that is from profit from Coles or Woolworths or profit gouging toll roads or hospital car parks or the government backed profit gouging banks. The more money that private pensions can get, the more they can keep the poors engaged with their growth. Coles

and Woolworths have a very big responsibility to private age pension share holders. Share holders have more power than us farmers or me as a consumer.

I do hope the committee finds the time to call all private age pensions to front your committee to see how much pressure they put on the coles and Woolworths boards and the banks to make sure that productive farmers supply cheaper food for their shelves and more profit to go to their private age pensions.

Madonna

Sent from my iPad

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