



9th March, 2015

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NSW Farmer of the Year 2014
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The Hon. Katrina Hodgkinson, MP
Minister for Primary Industries
GPO Box 5341
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Minister Hodgkinson,

As you are aware, both Kirrily and I were very proud to receive the 2014 NSW Farmer of the Year Award, and have been active in promoting the positives of farming and agriculture to the broader community in the period preceding and following receiving that award.

Kirrily has held several discussions with senior directors of your department since the awards, regarding the importance of achieving production systems that are profitable and resilient, whilst regenerating the condition of our farming land across NSW. We are looking forward to continuing those discussions with these senior members of your department.

I understand that Landcare NSW has also approached you and put forward a proposal whereby the capacity of Landcare to engage and assist more of our farmers to move towards regenerative farming practices would be revitalised.

Within in our own farming business as you have recognised, our progress has required *"great innovation, tapping into the latest science and seeking expertise from outside our enterprise"*

One model that has encouraged innovation, provided ready access to the practical application of research, and the opportunity to learn from and with leading farmers in our district has been Landcare. We have certainly been advantaged through learning opportunities, have been supported with project funding to assist us achieve our environmental outcomes and have hosted multiple field days to share our learnings through Landcare.

Landcare has helped transform farmers' understanding and involvement in sustainable farm practices and nature conservation. Through the Landcare network, otherwise non-adopters have become aware of changes they can make in their farming practices that benefit both the environment and their own profitability.

Landcare is a community based volunteer network that does require a clear Government policy commitment backed by sufficient funds to support the infrastructure that keeps the network going. Without this support from Government, Landcare will have difficulty achieving significant economic and environmental benefits to the whole community at low cost to the taxpayer.

I would like to commend this initiative to you and ask that you support it.

As **The Conscious Farmer**, our mission is to see healthy, nourishing food and quality fibre produced from healthy, living soils on farms that are thriving and profitable. Support for the revitalised Landcare program across NSW will certainly contribute towards this.

I am available to discuss these matters with you.

Yours sincerely,
Derek Blomfield