



# Agriculture and Food Policy Reference Group

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## **New report predicts bright future for agriculture and food sector**

A major independent report on the agriculture and food sector handed down today recommends a greater focus on innovation, cutting regulatory red tape and more effective supply chains.

The Chair of the Agriculture and Food Policy Reference Group, Peter Corish, who is President of the National Farmers' Federation, presented the report, *Creating Our Future*, to the Australian Government Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Peter McGauran.

“Other important recommendations include increasing skill levels, delivering on-farm environmental outcomes to benefit the whole community, and ensuring viable rural communities,” said Mr Corish.

“This report identifies the major issues that need attention to ensure the sector’s success over the next decade or more,” he added.

“The priority is to develop self-reliant and profitable agriculture and food businesses.”

The Reference Group was appointed in March 2005. It comprises eleven people with broad experience across the agriculture and food industries.

Mr Corish said the Reference Group had reviewed the sector’s complex operating environment.

“We’ve developed for the Minister’s consideration comprehensive recommendations aimed at improving the profitability, sustainability and competitiveness of these important industries,” he said.

“We found that, while a number of serious challenges lie ahead, there are also many opportunities and good reason to be optimistic about the future.

“Australian farmers and food processors have a proud history of overcoming adversity — droughts, distorted markets, volatile commodity prices and declining terms of trade, to name just a few.

“A partnership approach is often the best way to tackle the challenges we face. All parties — farmers, food manufacturers and distributors, representative organisations, rural communities and, of course, governments — have a vital role to play.

“The Reference Group consulted a wide range of individuals and organisations and we thank all those who participated.

“An ‘Overview’ of the report will shortly be sent to all farmers and food businesses in Australia to make sure the Reference Group’s findings are communicated widely.

“The Reference Group commends this report to the government. We must have the best policies and programs in place to help ensure a bright future for Australian agriculture and food.”

**Further information and copies of the full report are available at [www.agfoodgroup.gov.au](http://www.agfoodgroup.gov.au), on FreeCall 1800 427 978 or by emailing [secretariat@agfoodgroup.gov.au](mailto:secretariat@agfoodgroup.gov.au).**

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