

Newsletter: CK Momentum

Title: **Australian Agricultural Competitiveness**

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Date: March 2014

The Federal Government has announced a taskforce to prepare a White Paper on competitiveness in the Australian agricultural industry. Corporate & Commercial Lawyer Ben Walker gives an overview of the paper, that will seek to outline potential policies and strategies to improve the industry's competitiveness and profitability, boost trade and economic growth, and create greater productivity through innovation.

Terms of Reference

Terms of reference of the White Paper include:

- global and domestic food security and its role in creating a stronger and more competitive agriculture sector;
- methods of improving market returns at the farm gate;
- producer access to investment finance, farm debt levels and debt sustainability;
- the competitiveness of the Australian agriculture sector and its relationship with linked processing and value chains;
- the contribution of agriculture to regional centres and communities and ways to boost investment and jobs growth in these areas;
- the efficiency and competitiveness of sector inputs such as training, education, research and development and critical infrastructure to the agricultural value chain;
- the effectiveness of regulations affecting the agriculture sector, and its effects on competition, investment and private sector-led growth;
- opportunities for enhancing agricultural exports and new market access; and
- the effectiveness and economic benefits of existing incentives for investment and jobs creation in the agriculture sector.

What next?

The next step is the release of an 'issues paper' summarising key points and providing questions for members of the public to make written submissions on. The intention is to then develop a 'green paper' to be released in the first half of 2014 that will outline the Government's assessment of the critical problems, opportunities for the industry and provide some broad policy options.

The finalised White Paper is anticipated to be released towards the end of 2014. ClarkeKann will continue to monitor the progress and will notify our clients of any key developments.

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