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### **Register won't stop "tick and flick" sales of Aussie land**

Establishing a national foreign ownership register for agricultural land is typical of this government's lying duplicitous intentions to sell out the interests of Australians.

The issue is not about a statistical register, recording the sales of valuable agricultural land "after the horse has bolted", but whether or not we want foreign financial interests taking control of our valuable agricultural land in the first place.

Free trade-blinded politicians and bureaucrats such as Trade Minister Craig Emmerson fiercely defend the necessity to sell off our land for "crucial foreign investment" in order to protect their system of free-trade and globalisation and hence the banks dependent on that looting cash stream.

This argument does not take into account the important issue of sovereignty of our nation, or the real development of resources for all citizens, or the development of the future potential of our nation as foreign investments become subject to bottom line private-interests, especially the banks' profit margins.

This is the same issue relating to the mining industry which Gough Whitlam and Rex Connor fought to overcome 40 years ago when they wanted to "buy back the farm".

Whilst the Whitlam government was imperfect, its attempt to wrest control of our raw materials wealth from foreign interests was spot on the mark.

In 1966 then Deputy Opposition Leader Gough Whitlam addressed the University of New South Wales saying, "The government is condoning and encouraging the sale of our richest resources to overseas interests. Some of the most amazing mineral discoveries in our history are now in foreign hands. Foreigners do Australians the honour of employing them to dig up their own wealth, to be exported overseas... the whole of our production potential in aluminium is controlled by overseas interests. Almost all the new and rich iron ore discoveries, particularly in Western Australia, have been taken out of our hands... The new coal deposits in Queensland are controlled by overseas interests. Three quarters of the mining and treatment of copper is controlled by overseas interests. Already 70 percent of the mining of zinc is outside our control."

Opposing the sale of Australia's precious agricultural land raises the same issues Whitlam addressed. It is not a question of xenophobia but of domestic national food security.

A number of foreign countries around the world already have, either formally or informally, stated policies to acquire foreign food producing lands in order to export food back to their homelands, to the exclusion of Australian domestic markets. For example, the Qatar government-owned agricultural development and investment company the Hassad Food Company has been given a mandate by its government to secure a food supply for this rich oil-producing state; Qatar imports 95% of its food needs.

Given that global food shortages are already occurring in many parts of the world, food production and food security is a crucially important issue for many food-hungry nations today.

Australia can become a food bowl, with the potential to support at least 100 million people, but this requires a top-down government and war-time like mobilisation to make it happen. Not the free-trade inspired sell-off of our agricultural resources.

It would require the development of large scale water projects as the Citizens Electoral Council has called for; the development of large agricultural precincts with towns and cities to service them for people to live; the development of large-scale transport infrastructure, roads and high-speed rail such as the Australian Ring Rail proposal by the late Professor Lance Endersbee; the development of a high-speed shipping industry from Darwin to move high-value agricultural produce to the rapidly increasing populations of Asia; and the development of nuclear power for the entire region.

We would fund this type of large scale development with credit issued from a National Bank which the CEC has already designed in its Commonwealth National Credit Bank proposal. So we do not need to sell off the farm to foreign owners in order to develop it—we can issue the credit to do so, ourselves.

We would welcome collaborative partnerships with other governments, even other state-owned agencies to help us develop this region—but the ownership would remain Australian.”

Trade agreements would be on the basis of the mutually beneficial development of our food producing capability, for all countries involved—not on the free-trade looting policies of private Anglo-American agro-industrial cartels.

The presently ruling policies of globalisation, privatisation, deregulation and free trade, together with the enforcement of “environmentalist” policies so radical that they are best described as ‘green fascism’, are plunging the vast majority of Australians—along with most of the rest of the world—into poverty and misery; destroying our once-great nation; and eliminating any meaningful future for our children.

On behalf of the CEC, I place on the record our opposition to a mere register, and demand a complete reversal of the policies that are selling off Australian land in the first place.

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