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## RESOURCE SECURITY VITAL TO SUSTAINABLE LAND USE

The vast majority of Australians recognise that land and water resource security is vital if farmers are to manage their land in an environmentally sustainable way, according to independent research launched today by National Farmers' Federation President, Mr Peter Corish.

“The report, ‘Community Attitudes to Farmers and Resource Security,’ found that 95 per cent of those surveyed recognised that land and water resource security was vital to sustainable land use outcomes,” Mr Corish said. “Some 89 per cent believed farmers should be compensated if their land or water resources were restricted or taken away altogether.”

The research into public attitudes surrounding resource security for farmers was conducted this year by Crosby | Textor on behalf of the NFF.

As well as the survey of attitudes to resource security issues, the report gives a snapshot of the way farmers are viewed by the community. The report shows that rural and country Australia is regarded as the ‘backbone of Australia’ and that farmers are regarded as tough, hardworking, honest and down-to-earth people who are often confronted by challenges such as drought and isolation.

Launching the report in Brisbane today, Mr Corish said the research suggested that around 50 per cent of those Australians surveyed believed farmers were good or extremely good managers of the land, with another 13 per cent rating them as poor managers and the remainder neutral.

“Perhaps not surprisingly, city dwellers were more likely than country dwellers to rate farmers as poor environmental managers,” Mr Corish said. “This could reflect a lack of awareness of modern environmentally sustainable farming practices.”

Mr Corish said the findings suggested that farmers, and in particular organisations such as the NFF that represented farmers, needed to clearly deliver the facts about how farmers actually sustainably manage the environment and ensure that the public was well-educated about these issues.

“The fact is that farmers farm for the long term,” Mr Corish said. According to the latest ABARE data, 99 per cent of farms in Australia are family farms - which means that farms are owned and operated by people who understand the imperative of handing on the land to the next generation, and the duty of care and responsibility which that entails.

“Family farmers have probably the longest investment frameworks of any other business in the economy. That is why we have an explicit and vested interest in managing our natural resources – land and water – in an environmentally sustainable way.”

Mr Corish said it was encouraging for the NFF that when presented with some factual background about resource security issues, 95 per cent of those surveyed agreed that “land and water resource security is vital for farmers if they are to manage their natural resources in an environmentally sustainable way.”

“The NFF cannot overstate the importance of resource security to both delivering a viable farming sector and to ensure the long-term ecologically sustainable management of our Australian landscapes,” Mr Corish said.

A copy of the report is available in the media centre on the NFF website at [www.nff.org.au](http://www.nff.org.au)

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