



MEDIA RELEASE – James Harker-Mortlock – Independent for Hume – Thursday 21st March 2013

COWRA CANNERY ADMINISTRATION POINTS TO ABSENCE OF A NATIONAL AGRICULTURE POLICY

James Harker-Mortlock, independent candidate for the seat of Hume, made the following statement today : “The placing into administration of Cowra’s Windsor Farms Group, operators of Australia’s last domestically owned cannery, is potentially a great loss to the community of Cowra. Hopefully, the administrators will be able to find a purchaser wishing to continue the business and willing to re-engage the employees recently put out of work.

This event brings into focus the malaise affecting the Australian food industry as it struggles against a high Australian dollar favouring cheap foreign imports, supply-side issues caused by adverse weather conditions , aggressive direct marketing of private label products by the major grocery chains, and direct-sourcing by those same major grocery chains of processed goods from overseas which have been produced by major global multinationals.

This event reminds us of other issues confronting rural Australia - foreign ownership of Australian agriculture, the need for Australia to become the ‘fruit bowl of Asia’, the reduced funding for Australian agricultural research, the power of the major grocery chains and the cut price milk arrangements destroying Australian dairy farms.

We have no comprehensive agricultural policy designed to guarantee the viability of Australian owned farms, the profitability of Australian owned food processors and, critically, the food security of the nation.

Governments are very interested in increasing regulation and taxes but have little interest in research and on the ground help. More and more is being left to be done by an increasingly over-taxed, over-regulated, under-remunerated and ageing farming community.

Its time our governments showed the same faith in Australian agriculture as our farmers and food processors do. Developing a comprehensive policy on agriculture for the nation would be a start.”

ENDS

Contact : James Harker-Mortlock - Email : james@puttinghumefirst.com; Mobile : 04 111 82649

Website : <http://www.puttinghumefirst.com>