

# Land Management Commitment

*February 2024 progress update*

## What is the Land Management Commitment?

The Australian beef industry exports over 70% of its beef production. Increasingly, our international markets and their companies are aligning Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) reporting to meet shareholder and consumer interest in demonstrating sustainable food production, and global commitments to the Paris Agreement.

Over 6000 global companies have aligned with the Science Based Target Initiative (SBTi). SBTi is a European-driven not-for-profit organisation that requires companies to set public reporting targets for reduced emissions, zero deforestation, and demonstrated improvements to biodiversity within their supply shed. Importantly, these global companies will be required to report their progress against their targets by 2024 via mandatory public disclosures.

The Australian landscape is one of the driest in the world and has some of the oldest soils in the world. Evolving over the past 50 million years, our landscape, its plants, animals and ecological systems are incredibly unique.

While we haven't always gotten it right, we have learned and evolved our practices as science and research and development improve. Australian producers have a strong history of innovating and developing land management practices to suit the environment. Given the unique nature of the Australian landscape, we must provide regionally specific indicators for global reporting that recognises the inherent ecological differences within Australia.

## What are the commitments?

1. Develop a national definition on deforestation for the Australian context, to be globally accepted for use in the supply chain and by financial institutions.
2. Develop a voluntary and market-driven minimum sustainability standard on environmental stewardship to be used in the traceability system to inform consumers.

## Rockhampton Industry Roundtable

An Australian beef industry meeting was held in Rockhampton, Queensland, on November 7 and 8, 2023. The goal of this meeting was to seek a commitment that a clear evidence-based definition of deforestation and biodiversity for the Australian landscape is required. The group of 50 industry leaders from across the supply chain - including leading producers, corporate agricultural companies, peak industry bodies, government, state farming organisations, processors, retailers, and finance industry representatives - discussed a national approach to international reporting requirements. This provides transparency and traceability to our customers and gives confidence to consumers and stakeholders in the scientific validity of land management practices in Australian beef production systems.

## What happened in February?

On February 15, Cattle Australia held a second webinar for those that could not attend in January, and to provide project updates. Recordings of both webinars are now available on the [Cattle Australia website](#).

In February, the Advisory Board held one meeting, which included important discussions around governance, communications, funding, risk register, and webinar planning.

Cattle Australia published an Expression of Interest (EOI) document seeking interested parties to submit an EOI for the required consulting work. Cattle Australia then assessed the EOIs and mapped the outlined skills and expertise. This process allowed the refinement of the Request for Proposal document to encourage interested parties to consider a consortium arrangement.

After the EOI closed, Cattle Australia published a Request for Proposal (RFP) document seeking interested parties to submit a detailed project proposal. The request for proposal process is open until midnight on March 13, 2024.

Cattle Australia also met with several industry stakeholders including research and development bodies, government departments and supply chain partners to update them on the Land Management Commitment and seek their funding support.

## What are the next steps?

- Confirm the successful candidate from the Request for Proposal process.
- Commence contracting arrangements for the successful candidate.
- Provide updates to industry stakeholders at the Australian Beef Sustainability Framework Industry Forum.
- Continued engagement with other agricultural commodities to ensure we maintain cross-commodity alignment.
- Develop a Technical Working Group.
- Update the communications plan that supports the Land Management Commitment work.