

## Introduction and Welcome

### **Kerry Lonergan:**

Thanks Tony. Good morning again everybody. My name's Kerry Lonergan. I'm from the ABC's Landline program and it's my pleasure to keep things loosely organised here today.

I was speaking earlier to David Crombie and we were mentioning how important this day was, and it's exactly what I was thinking about when I came here this morning on the CityCat—it is an extremely important conference because it's ... these are seminal days for agriculture in Australia and they are seminal for one very big reason and it's what's happening with our northern neighbours, I'm talking about the big countries like Indonesia, India, China, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines etcetera. If you go there and talk to people, or if they come here and you talk to agribusiness people from those countries, politicians, bureaucrats, people involved in the business generally, two words stand out whenever they're making a decision about anything they do up there—and that is food security. Food security is the number one subject when you talk to those people on any decision-making process they have, in any business. In fact, it's got so bizarre that in China at present—I was listening to BBC Radio a couple of nights ago—and they are actually demolishing entire mountain ranges in China so they can have flat country to grow crops. At the moment China is demolishing about 100 square millimetres of mountaintops so that they can grow crops on that country. That's what China's attitudes to food security are.

And that's why this conference is very important. And I do like the two-part theme of today's conference: "What we need to do". And the second part is "What we need to do to get done what we need to do". And the second part of that—"What we need to do to get done what we need to do"—inevitably involves politicians, and I have to say when I hear the words 'politicians' and 'getting things done', I think of the words of Gough Whitlam. Gough Whitlam was guest of honour at a dinner in London many years ago, given by the Lord Mayor of London who was an ultraconservative, and the minders for Gough were very worried about what they would have in common. They gave Gough some briefing notes in the Lord Mayor and Gough noted that the Lord Mayor of London was quite an accomplished oarsman—he had rowed in fact for Britain and England at world championships. So Gough stood up and said, when it came time for him to speak, he stood up and said: "My Lord, ladies and gentleman, so pleased to be here with the Lord Mayor of London. We have something in common. He's a famous oarsman, and I am a politician. And what we have in common is we can both look in one direction and head as fast as we can the other way."

Can I get things moving by introducing the Chairman of the ALM Group, Julia Telford. Julia works in Queensland, at Goondiwindi, and is a Principal of Engage and Create Consulting, a business focussing on improving the viability and vibrancy of community organisations and small businesses across rural and regional Australia. Through this, Julia works across industries and sectors, with the majority of consulting occurring across the themes of supporting women, agricultural, sustainability and the environment, regional development, mental health awareness, and cultural diversity and awareness in regional Australia. Please welcome Julia Telford.

### **Julia Telford:**

Good morning everybody. It's lovely to see some familiar faces and meet some new people today, and I'm really encouraged by the conversations that a few of us had over dinner last night and already this morning. So I would like to welcome and kick off the day with just a couple of comments.

So I'm really pleased to be here and to see such a solid cross-section of the sectors that we need to have involved with some of the conversations we want to have today. In this room

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we represent landholders, community organisations, industry and government, and we're all involved at some level in determining how we can work together to support, recognise and reward superior environmental and animal welfare management. And so I'd also like to thank our partners and supporters for today—so the Australian Government Biodiversity Fund, Elders, Queensland Murray Darling Committee, the Maranoa Regional Council, and the landholders.

I guess it's no surprise that the Australian Land Management Group would want to convene a symposium such as today. It really cuts to the core of what we're about and who we are. And our organisation was established by a group of progressive Australian landholders, and people are in the room who were involved with its establishment, because they wanted to focus on how landholders could be recognised and rewarded for the good natural resource management and animal welfare work they did on their properties. And that this verification should be recognised by government, supply chains and consumers, both here and overseas. So it's really important for us today to be able to have the people identify that we need to have this discussion is really heartening. I guess as Kerry alluded to, that's step one: How we actually can make some progress on some of the conversations and use today as a platform going forward is really where we want to be able to get to.

And there's no reason that we need to put these discussions off for another day. We've got all the examples in the room today of what we often talk about. So we talk about needing innovative landholders. We've got that, both with the landholders and the work that they're doing on their places and also in their communities and industries. We've got people who are involved with community and helping identify and clearly communicate the needs of community and what they're wanting. And we've got people that are working at the interface with our value chains and with government to promote our product, both here and overseas. So we really are ready I think to progress how we can support the recognition and reward for good natural resources and animal welfare management. Today is about what we want to do about it and how we want to move forward.