

PREFACE

The long-term sustainable production of food and fibre by our primary industries is imperative to all; not just living Australians, but also the billions of other people around the world who will need to be fed and clothed in the coming decades. Climate change presents perhaps the greatest economic and environmental challenge we have ever faced. Our primary industries will need to adapt to changes in temperature, extreme events, rainfall and its distribution, to an extent that we haven't experienced before. Further, our primary industries will need to adapt to the significant policy responses that will need to be made to substantially reduce our emissions in the coming years. It is increasingly apparent that changes to climate will have a greater impact on Australian primary producers than on most others: we already live in one of the harshest and most variable climates in the world and this is only likely to become more so under most current projections.

Two things are clear. Firstly, our adaptive response must be supported by good science. In this regard, we need to ensure our research, development and extension effort is well planned and well funded. The National Climate Change Research Strategy for Primary Industries, involving CSIRO, all Research and Development Corporations, all the States and the Commonwealth, is working hard to ensure efficient and effective targeted activity across all primary industry research agencies. Secondly, as the research strategy demonstrated, access to good quality information by all parties is essential to address the climate change challenge. This book is a result of both these drivers. It provides an excellent reference covering the latest research that will assist our many primary industries in meeting the challenges of climate change.

It also highlights just how much more needs to be done. Our innovative and adaptive producers must continue to push the envelope on the basis of good science combined with their intimate knowledge to feed and clothe the world in the decades ahead.

This book also demonstrates what can be done with collaboration and coordination. It is the result of many years of work by many scientists from many agencies. Importantly, it will assist broader collaboration among policy makers, industry, researchers and supporting agencies in finding and implementing practical solutions to the challenges of climate change.

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