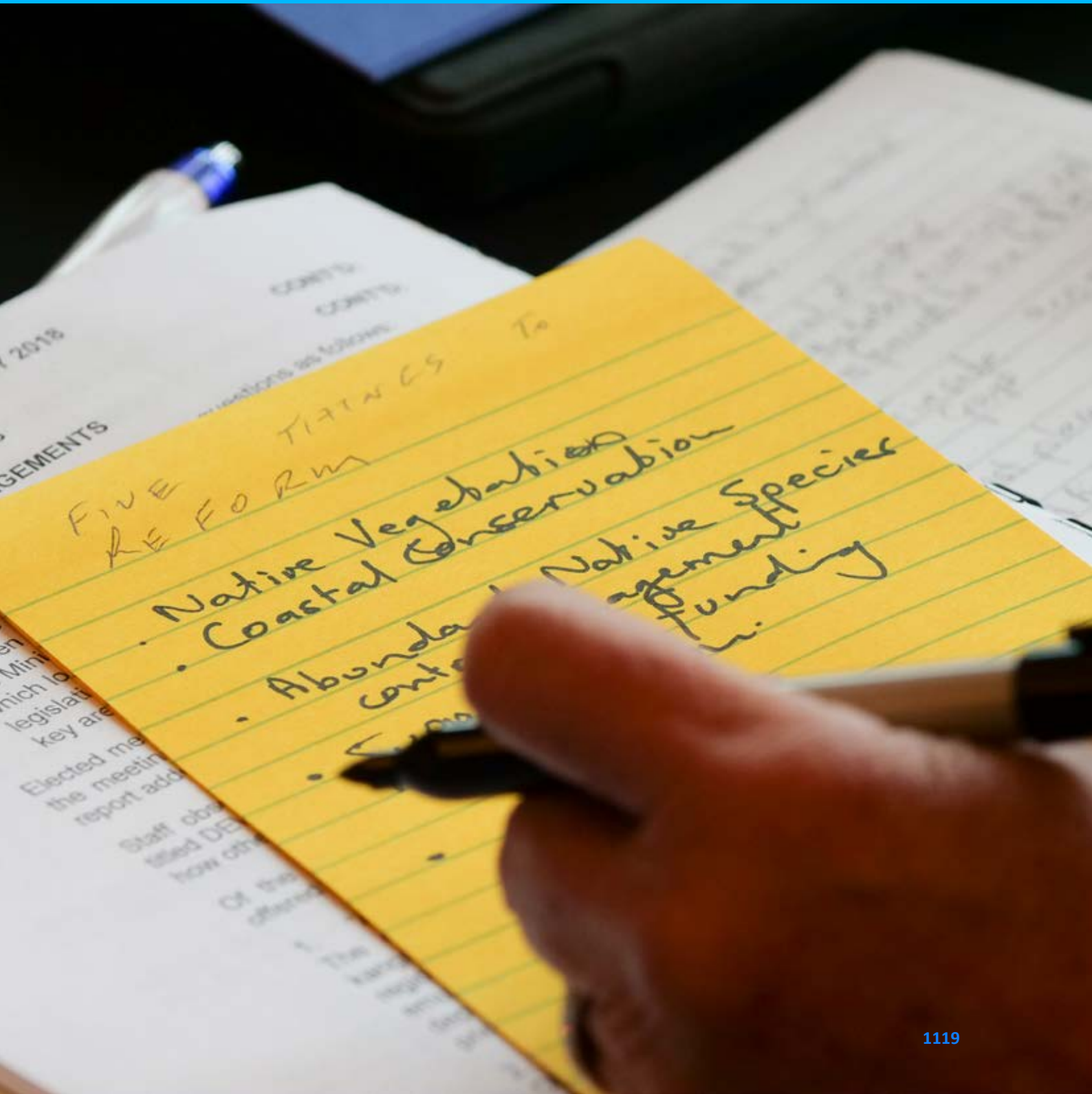


8.10 | Written Submissions From Primary Producer Organisations



Register of written submissions from Primary Producer organisations

Date Received	Given name	Family name	Organisation
29-Jun-18	Rob	Kerin	Primary Producers SA
7-Sep-18	Jennifer	Lynch	McLaren Vale Grape Wine & Tourism Association
14-Oct-18	Mark	Stanley	Ag Excellence Alliance
15-Oct-18	Melissa	Rebbeck	Fleurieu Beef Group Inc
15-Oct-18	Mark	Gishen	SA Wine Industry
15-Oct-18	Darren	Keenan	Agriculture Kangaroo Island
15-Oct-18	Rob	Kerin	Primary Producers SA
19-Oct-18	Mark	Grossman	Agricultural Bureau of SA Inc

Friday 29 June 2018

Dear Minister Speirs

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the impending NRM reforms and the new *Landscape South Australia* legislation.

You have already acknowledged a key priority for Primary Producers SA:

- **Re-empowerment of regions** – including via
 - re-empowerment of NRM/Landscape SA boards (greater autonomy) to
 - control their budgets and
 - employ staff (and to engage contractors as appropriate, including industry groups and other non-government organisations, for example)

In particular, we would like to acknowledge the importance of successfully passing the new legislation through both houses of Parliament in a timely manner. With this in mind, we believe that water management provisions will need to continue to be included in the new Bill. The legislation being drafted will need to establish a robust, fair, streamlined and enabling framework, addressing the key dot points above. Perhaps a schedule could be set to address some of the more controversial and/or complex issues in more detail, following the enactment of the new legislation.

Water management is a priority area for primary producers and the legislation should be simplified and incorporate the flexibility for NRM/Landscape SA regions to utilise the most appropriate tools for water planning and management. There will be more work to be done in the area of water management following the introduction of the new legislation.

There is a need to carefully explore the demand for, and the community response to, the option for NRM/Landscape SA authorities to issue expiation notices (at an appropriate level) for significant and ongoing **animal and plant control** transgressions. The ability to adequately address animal and plant control challenges within the new legislative framework needs to be carefully considered.

The new legislation should take into account the potential for further incorporation of native vegetation management provisions (including those currently residing in the *Native Vegetation Act* and *Regulations*) to be considered, although this currently seems more likely to occur at a later date.

Soil and land management remain critical components of the management of natural resources as well; with practical research, development, extension and adoption activities being delivered by local and regional farming systems groups, for example.

Our NRM policy, which was finalised prior to the state election, is attached as an appendix.

Management of climate variability provides ongoing challenges to both primary producers and natural environments, within and outside the NRM system.

In addition, we note that court processes should only be used as a “last resort” option, bearing in mind the very high public and private costs of these processes (and therefore cost inefficiency in achieving outcomes, except in the very worst cases where there needs to be a public penalty/disincentive). There have been examples of both water and native vegetation issues where the ability to negotiate further could have produced much better and more cost-effective outcomes.

We look forward to consulting more thoroughly with our sector on the NRM Reform – and assisting with the government’s engagement processes – over the coming months.

For more information or to discuss this matter further, please don’t hesitate to contact Rob Kerin on 0439 933 103 or robkerin@ymail.com or Amy Williams on 0427 803 805 or amywilliams28@bigpond.com.

Yours sincerely



Rob Kerin
Independent Chair
Primary Producers SA



Fiona Rasheed
Chair, NRM Committee
Primary Producers SA

Appendix: PPSA NRM Policy

Engagement of primary producers in NRM policy and planning

While acknowledging suggestions for more radical changes to NRM, we accept that there must be management and governance of natural resources – both assets and risks – and investment in NRM. A system which engages and empowers (and is accountable to) local communities and regions is preferable to a system relying on centralised decision-making in Adelaide. The NRM system needs to return to its original intent to allow regional and subregional engagement and decision-making.

- **Re-empowerment of regions**

While striving to achieve and maintain high levels of responsiveness and efficiency, NRM Boards need to be able to manage their budgets without unnecessary State Government interference, identify regional priorities (and therefore the work that staff do in the region) and direct the development of appropriate local and regional policy. This should encompass the ability to engage their own staff or contractors.

This does not diminish the role of the SA Government in coordination across the regions. There should be very strong involvement of NRM Boards and industry groups (regional input) in the development of statewide policy.

NRM Boards should consider a nimble organisational design with a small core staff, contracting additional work to the most appropriate organisations and people – including resourcing industry/producer groups for engagement, communications and project delivery.

Less time should be spent on glossy documents and PR and more on practical actions and outcomes.

- **Succession planning**

It has become difficult to recruit appropriate candidates for NRM Board roles, particularly when previous and current board members have not felt that they have been able to genuinely influence policy and outcomes. Therefore addressing the above point (re-empowerment of boards and regions) is critical to achieving effective NRM Board composition.

Once this is addressed, we recommend that NRM Boards take a pro-active role in partnership with industry groups and primary producer networks (including local and regional groups) to recruit appropriate board members. It is critical that there is effective primary producer representation on NRM Boards and committees and in the development of policy.

- **Time constraints on primary producer engagement**

Industry groups and networks should be resourced to assist with communications and engagement on plans and policy development – with early and ongoing dialogue, including to work out the issues of importance to primary producers and how to strategically work together on those issues. This would be in contrast to using employees or consultants (particularly those without an extensive knowledge of primary producer networks and imperatives); as well as contrasting with mailouts (e.g. USBs containing long documents) without adequate and appropriate supporting communications and meetings or roadshows based on government and/or NRM Board timeframes, which are not well coordinated with local groups and therefore not well attended.

- Strategies need to be put in place to address turnover of government staff as a real challenge to good engagement (particularly on water planning and management and water policy) and good outcomes. The ability of NRM Boards to engage their own staff and contractors (including resourcing industry groups and networks) over appropriate timeframes may assist with this.
- Regions should be able to determine or strongly influence the timing of reviews or changes to their water allocation plans and policies, bearing in mind both regional priorities (and budgets) and DEW resourcing capacity.

Key investment areas

NRM levy charges need to be contained at the lowest reasonable and sustainable level, including through appropriate levels of investment from the SA Government and Australian Government. Investment is expected in sustainable land management and production practices (including soil management and appropriate capital investments) – particularly via producer groups and networks – and animal and plant control (including the management of wild dogs and feral animals).

Water planning and management

- Refocus investment into better science and better engagement on the science underpinning water policy, as well as work on licensing, permitting, allocation and transfer processes. There is also a general need for further work on water policy development with strong industry/local community engagement.

For example, there is clearly a need for more work under Priority 8 in the State NRM Plan to *“increase the use of local knowledge in NRM”*.

This needs to happen in the context that there are very strong drivers to maximise efficiency and minimise bureaucracy. The tension between investing in better science and issues regarding the recovery of costs through NRM levies – and **the need to keep those costs to a minimum** – needs to be noted.

- **Water licensing and administration**

NRM Boards and regional staff should be consulted on any significant communications from the licensing section of DEW.

- Provisions that quickly elevate licence or allocation queries to ERD Court processes need to be reviewed as a matter of urgency.
- The processes for allocating and transferring water rights should be workshopped with key stakeholders.¹

- **More dynamic (timely and responsive) and efficient water management systems**

DEW, NRM Boards and PPSA (and our commodity groups and industry networks) need to work in partnership to significantly improve the science and IT and communication systems, to make good information quickly available and easily accessible, enabling good policy decisions and good business decisions (for example, regarding seasonal allocations, water availability, carryover provisions) with minimal bureaucracy. This would encompass capacity building of primary producers to access and use this information, clearly understand water policy frameworks and manage risk. Seasonal allocation and carryover policies need to be clearly communicated, with timely notification (as early as possible) and discussion about prioritisation of different uses in times of scarcity for River Murray water.

A number of “hot spots” have been identified, requiring specific work more urgently. For example, ongoing work is required in close collaboration with producers in the Virginia region (addressing water table and flood mitigation issues), Mt Lofty Ranges, South East (to ensure appropriate drainage infrastructure investment and monitoring of groundwater systems) and with River Murray water users.

¹ This would encompass issues such as conjunctive use, “new use”, succession and relationship breakdown (property settlement) issues.

- **Triple bottom line – strengthening the economics**

Work must be undertaken to strengthen the socio-economic information base regarding prescription, the separation of water rights from land rights and impacts on property values, opportunity costs, transaction costs and compliance costs (such as costs of metering, low flow provisions and professional services such as engineering required for applications) – as well as the allocation of costs/“cost-sharing”.

This work should facilitate comparison with interstate and overseas costs, including compliance costs and opportunity costs; as well as to contain and explain water levies, for example, with more transparency and a better “line of sight”. This is consistent with previous SA Government aims and policies to be “**the best place to do business**” and to create “**the most cost-competitive business environment in the nation**”.

As part of this, tradeability, or transferability, of water rights across the state – and the implications of those policies – would be reviewed. Part of the work would also consider the application of levy charges based on licensed volumes rather than volumes of water used (and the signals and incentives embodied in that). Inequity between water buybacks for the River Murray and allocation reductions in other areas would also be discussed.

There should be regular independent review of water planning and management costs and their cost effectiveness, as agreed as part of the National Water Initiative:

“Where costs are recoverable from water users (in whole or in part), activities will be tested for cost-effectiveness by an independent party and the findings of the cost-effectiveness inquiry are to be made public”

- Conflicts of interest in advocating for SA Water versus other water users need to be avoided in the governance of water resources. This arises with the Minister for Water and the River Murray also being the Minister responsible for SA Water.
- Producers reliant on potable SA Water supplies should be supported to shift to alternative supplies.

Native vegetation management

PPSA would like to acknowledge the pro-active engagement undertaken by DEW in the past couple of years and are very supportive of moves towards private landholders (as well as environmental NGOs) being able to supply – and be paid for – biodiversity offsets. It is noted that the transaction costs associated with this need to be kept to a minimum for this system to be effective. Regulations governing the clearance of native vegetation and offsetting of clearance also need to be kept fair and reasonable.

Careful consideration should be given to recognition and reward for the protection of native vegetation and biodiversity on private land (especially long term protection of remnant vegetation, including via Heritage Agreements) and the interaction between that and native vegetation clearance offsets (SEBs), NRM Board incentives and carbon credits, for example. PPSA would be pleased to continue working with DEW on these issues.

Cost sharing

Levies raised in a region should be spent on the core, essential activities in a region, with state and federal funding used to supplement and support regions with smaller levy bases in particular – and to help to keep levy charges to an absolute minimum, ensuring that SA provides a cost-competitive environment for primary producers.

As mentioned above, there should be transparency and a clear line of sight between water levies and water planning and management expenditure in each region.

Landscape Reform
GPO Box 1047
Adelaide SA 5001



7th September 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

RE: Response to Managing Our Landscapes Discussion Paper and proposed *Landscape South Australia Act*

I write to you on behalf of the McLaren Vale Grape Wine & Tourism Association (MVGWTA) – the peak body representing more than 500 businesses – encompassing all grape-growers, winemakers and tourism providers in one of Australia’s most valuable wine tourism regions – McLaren Vale, South Australia.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the Managing Our Landscapes Discussion Paper and proposed *Landscape South Australia Act*.

The tourism, agriculture and food production industries are all major employers of our region which contribute billions of dollars to our State’s economy. Our State’s regions hold particular significance in these industries and are recognised worldwide as iconic South Australian destinations.

In 2012, the regional distinctiveness and contribution of both the McLaren Vale and Barossa districts to our State was formally recognised and protected through the introduction of the *Character Preservation (McLaren Vale) Act 2012* and *Character Preservation (Barossa) Act 2012*.

The *Character Preservation (McLaren Vale) Act 2012* provides reassurance to our community – both business and residential – that the unique attributes of McLaren Vale are also acknowledged and highly valued by our State, and that the protection of these attributes is paramount to the long-term vision for building our State’s economy and global reputation for premium food and wine from a clean environment.

Reviewing the Summary of the Discussion Paper (July 2018), MVGWTA provides the following feedback, and, specifically highlights the following two (2) proposed reforms of being significant to our region’s long-term prosperity:

Decentralised Decision-Making and Community-led Landscape Management

MVGWTA’s strongly acknowledges that decentralised decision-making encourages greater local stewardship and ownership of natural resource management. The protection of natural resources is paramount to the long-term vision for building our State’s economy and global reputation for premium food and wine from a clean environment.

The protection of these natural resource priorities and our State’s global reputation can only be maintained through universally agreed minimum standards for managing and enhancing soil quality, water management and pest plant and animal control across all levels of land owners and stakeholders – individuals, community, business and industry, Local Government Associations and agencies, as well as the State Government.

MVGWTA seeks further clarity regarding the proposed decentralised decision-making and community-led landscape management reforms’ ability to ensure agreed minimum standards for our State’s whole-of-landscape natural resource management are maintained.



Wine, Food, Beaches
Markets, Trails, Art

1126

McLaren Vale Grape Wine & Tourism Association
P: +61 8 8323 8999 W: www.mclarenvale.info E: info@mclarenvale.info



Landscape Boards and Landscape Board Boundaries

Soil quality, water management and pest plant and animal control requirements do not operate in isolation, nor respect 'boundaries' or borders.

The vitality and success of one or all of these priorities at a local level and a State level is incumbent upon equitable and agreed minimum standards – irrespective of identified and designated boundaries.

Whilst MVGWTA supports the four identified natural resource priorities of soil quality, water management and pest plant and animal control, MVGWTA seeks further clarity regarding the proposed Landscape Boards' and Boundaries' ability to ensure cohesive inter-regional management and priority management, as well as consistent and clear communications regarding priorities, management, targets, funding and employment.

McLaren Vale has a unique sense of place which cannot be duplicated anywhere else in the world. The value and protection of place through well-considered and thoughtful Planning Policies – including the perpetuation of our State's Character Preservation Act – is fundamental to the prosperity of future generations and industry in regional communities.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss this further, and thank you for you for your consideration of MVGWTA's request.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Lynch
General Manager, MVGWTA



Wine, Food, Beaches
Markets, Trails, Art

McLaren Vale Grape Wine & Tourism Association
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Hon David Speirs
Level 10, 81-95
Waymouth Street,
ADELAIDE SA 5000
landscapereform@sa.gov.au
Monday, 27 August 2018

Dear Minister

Re: Response to the NRM Reform in South Australia

The Ag Excellence Alliance would like to congratulate you on the reform agenda you have put in place to ensure a more responsive, simpler and community involved NRM sector. Ag Ex has a long history of working effectively with NRM in SA, and has strong relationships and partnerships with a number of the NRM regions across state. Ag Ex also works effectively with government at the state and national level in Landcare; the industry research & development corporations; universities; and research, development and extension providers. We believe the grower group network in SA is well placed to be at forefront of implementing and supporting the new direction of NRM in the state.

Ag Ex was established in 2005 to provide leadership, encourage collaboration and independence in support to the farming sector, through working with the 16 grower groups across the state that drive local research, development and extension, improving the profitability and sustainability of farming businesses. The collective power of groups is a strong force in influencing and driving positive change in the agricultural sector. Ag Ex provides communication services and manages a range of projects that contribute to the profitability and sustainability of farm businesses across South Australia. Projects are supported by a diversity of funders and are delivered in collaboration with grower groups and other industry partners. The goals of Ag Ex are to:

1. Empower, support and up skill Ag Ex grower group members and industry networks
2. Facilitate collaborative technical, business, environmental and social project development
3. Advocate for the role played by grower groups and industry networks
4. Advocate and support the delivery of extension, adoption and practice change

Decentralised decision making

Ag Ex supports the move to make decision making in NRM focussed in the regions and with greater community involvement. There are many avenues that are currently employed for identifying issues and setting priorities and it is hoped the new Landscapes SA will engage with these rather than duplicate what is already occurring. Having trusting and transparent relationships with organisations that want to engage and be actively involved in NRM will provide positive outcomes for all involved. The grower group network provides a highly representative and responsive avenue for engaging with land managers to address relevant NRM issues.

A simple and accessible system

Systems that are both easy to access, work with and report on are critical to the success of achieving effective on ground NRM outcomes. Community owed and driven organisations don't want to be hampered by complex bureaucratic processes, but on the other hand they need to be transparent and accountable to the funders of the projects they are delivering. The grower group network in SA has a very good history of delivering NRM funded

programs on time and budget, with effective community engagement and significant NRM outcomes being achieved.

A whole of landscape approach

Broad acre farmers are the largest land managers in the state. They integrate the management of their productive landscapes with the natural landscapes on their properties. Farmers are very aware of the impacts of their farming systems on the natural systems on their properties, and recognise the value of maintaining and enhancing soil health, water resources and native vegetation on their properties. Farming groups provide the most effective avenue for the farming community to priorities issues and to trial, demonstrate and extend new and innovative practices that enhance both productive and natural systems. They also provide the avenue for farmers to work collaboratively across property boundaries.

Community and land owners at the centre

Results from a survey of grower groups conducted in 2016 by the Ag Excellence Alliance in SA showed that a total of 4,532 farm businesses were members of a least one grower group. Given there are around 6,000 broadacre farm businesses across the state, 75% of farm businesses in the state are members of a grower group.

Grower groups are 'innovation brokers', bringing farm advisors, researchers, regional NRM organisations, resellers and farmers together. They provide much of the local/on-ground information and support "soft- infrastructure" that farmers seek, and this helps industry and government achieve their goals. Groups have strong industry wide representative membership bases that can capture the grass roots issues on ground and identify future needs early and feed that information up the line. They provide an avenue to attract funding to address local production and farm management issues.

Groups engage well with a broad segment of the industry and are crucial contributors to the regional extension network. Groups provide a vehicle that can adapt broader information to make it relevant to each region. They are a key influence in the uptake of new farming practices. They also provide an avenue for young farmers to take on leadership roles and be influential in driving local research, development and extension needs.

Groups adapt research findings to local conditions and provide an important link between the researchers and growers. They provide an avenue to put the research on the ground in an efficient and timely manner.

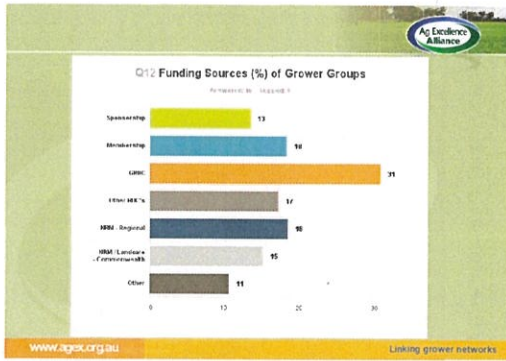
Renewed focus on the issues that matter most to regional communities – soil, water and pest plants and animals.

The farm extension system operating in South Australia has changed dramatically over the past three decades, and is continuing to evolve. The private sector is now dominant in providing advice to farmers, and there will not be a return to the public-sector extension model that has operated over much of the past century (*ref: Mick Keough, review of extension systems in Australia*).

Key drivers of strategic change in the farming sector are now grower groups and farm advisers. Key trusted advisers are a link to these groups. The groups have the trust of government and industry funding bodies to be the key recipients of funds to drive regional research, development and extension at the local, regional and state level. These groups are now the regional research centers that were once the domain of the state agencies. Some NRM regions have recognised this and have formed strong partnerships with farming groups to develop and support initiatives that drive sustainable land use and profitable farming systems in the regions.

What are grower groups?

Grower groups are defined as those groups that are farmer driven with a farmer led committee, are incorporated bodies, manage a range of government and industry funded RD&E project, have a membership base, employ at least part time staff and can service areas from sub regional through to state wide in scope. There are also many more



grower groups that are not incorporated and their main function is to facilitate discussion on local issues. They differ markedly in their size and in their ability to deliver complex research outcomes. Grower groups are very effective at integrating public good NRM issues into production based projects. Funding is predominately from the industry R&D corporations and Australian Government programs such as the National Landcare Program. NRM regions and the State government agencies have also been supporters of these groups activities, however this source of funding is becoming increasingly tight and competitive. *Figure 1: Funding sources of grower groups in SA – Ag Ex Survey of Grower Groups, 2016*

What do grower groups do well

Grower groups and advisers provide significant value to the agricultural industries, state and Commonwealth governments by;

- providing credible access to farmers and their support networks;
- providing a vehicle to access and coordinate funding through Research and Development Corporations and Australian Government investment in the state;
- having a proven track record of delivering research outcomes for agriculture RD&E;
- providing a good understanding of the technology adoption process and having the capacity through the support of advisers to adapt practices and innovations to suit local conditions and ensure faster adoption by farmers;
- providing a vehicle for identifying emerging issues quickly, which RDC's and Government can use for strategic and tactical investment decisions. They provide input to local policy makers and managers on RD&E priorities as demonstrated with members of the RCSN networks, many of whom are grower group members.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into this important reform of the NRM sector. Ag Ex is willing to provide clarity and support to achieving an more engaged and effective NRM sector in the state.

Your sincerely

Mark Stanley

Executive Officer – Strategy, Projects & Partnerships

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 15 October, 2018 12:59 PM
To: Landscape Reform
Subject: Landscapes Reform Comments on behalf of the Fleurieu Beef Group Inc
Attachments: FBG edit.docx; Geoff Davis archive.doc; IMG_0703.JPG; IMG_0706.JPG; mark higgins.docx; Richard Lawrence.docx; steverogers.pdf; Synopsis of Issues.doc

To Whom it May Concern,

As the secretary of the Fleurieu Beef Group Inc, I have been instructed on behalf of the group to submit the attached information. Some of the attachments are from individual producers and other information is from our archives and relates to the reform.

The Fleurieu Beef Group Incorporated have been operating since 1998. We meet every month and look at issues and opportunities that would improve our cattle businesses. We have a strong core membership of 25 members. We trust that you will be able to use the collective comments and articles to shape the landscapes reform for the Fleurieu region.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on behalf of the FBG Inc if you require anything further.

Yours sincerely

Melissa Rebbeck

Fleurieu Beef Group Inc – Secretary/Treasurer

[REDACTED]
PO Box 25, Goolwa, S.A. 5214



Fleurieu Beef Group Inc.
C/o EC Phillipson & Co
GPO Box 216
Adelaide
S.A. 5001

Mr. John Coombe
Chief Executive Officer
Alexandrina Council
Dawson Street
PO Box 21
Goolwa
S.A. 5214

29/3/2010

RE: **1. WEED INFESTATION ON THE FLEURIEU PENINSULA**
2. WEED MANAGEMENT

Dear Mr Coombe,

We wish to express our concern and dismay at the continued and accelerating degradation of land and water courses on the Fleurieu Peninsula caused by weeds.

In November 2003, the Fleurieu Beef Group Inc, (FBG), wrote to the Fleurieu Peninsula Councils expressing similar concerns.

The FBG has operated for nearly 15 years and comprises more than 30 farmers, all having a commercial interest in beef production, and land and water course management. Geographically, farms represented by the FBG are located from Meadows to Parawa and are situated on the east and west zones of the Mount Lofty Ranges.

Prior to the establishment of the Natural Resources Management [NRM] Board, weed control was decisive and effective.

Today, the threat of weed invasion and contamination is increasing. The "careless" and low priority placed upon weed control has resulted in a multiplication of threats and costs to our businesses. The ever increasing infestation of weeds into and throughout the Fleurieu Peninsula is like a chain reaction, compounding further rapid spread. The Fleurieu is venturing into a situation never known before, where declared weeds are so prevalent that their control is becoming difficult in the extreme.

Many of our members have had direct contact with the relevant authorities of the NRM with disappointing results.

We are writing to you because it has come to our attention that Councils believe that NRM is looking after the rural hinterland and thus Councils' attention is engaged predominately in the urban areas. This trust in NRM is not working. Councils traditionally have been the recognised managers of our region and we ask, for example, do you want the rural hinterland "weed infested" and purple with Salvation Jane from Willunga Hill to the coast.

Are Councils aware that the terrible weed, Caltrop, is on the increase? This weed has the potential to pierce push bike tyres and inflict nasty wounds on unprotected feet. Is this what we want for our region?

We are writing to Councils because we are confident in the belief that they do not want a degraded rural hinterland. What we are respectfully asking Councils to do, is to develop a vision and plan for rural hinterlands and then “take hold of the steering wheel” to make it happen.

We are asking for a return to the basics of weed management whereby:

- Contaminated fodder could not be transported without permits.
- Stock inspectors checked saleyards for weed contamination.
- Quarries are kept “squeaky clean” of all weeds.
- Roadside weeds are controlled.
- Engagement with land owners who neglect weed control.

It is these basic elements of weed management that have been neglected. For example; the inundation of quarries with Salvation Jane through the 1990’s, resulted in the transportation of contaminated material to all corners of the Fleurieu Peninsula. This situation could easily have been avoided. Almost anything we do from here would be better than what we are currently doing.

The ball is in your court and the FBG would respectfully appreciate a non-political response to this issue. We assure you of our support toward a better weed management programme.

Yours faithfully

Fleurieu Beef Group Inc.
c/o E C Phillipson & Co
GPO Box 216
Adelaide
S.A. 5001



W.J.(Bill) Davies
Director
Land & Biodiversity Services, DWLBC
17/2/2006

RE: Proposed Outcomes

1) Legal registration of weed infestation at point of sale

Point of sale of land provides a unique opportunity to recognize and bring to account weed infestation of land. At the present time prospective purchasers of land are ill informed of their responsibilities and liability to prevent land degradation resulting from infestation by declared weeds. Equally they are often unaware of the cost liabilities involved in the eradication of the weeds on the land.

It is not in the interests of Vendors or Land Agents to ensure that buyers are properly informed of their responsibilities and liabilities for weed management. This results in purchasers often being unable to budget sufficient resources to address the problem.

We believe that the vender has a duty of care to inform the purchaser of the liabilities which attach to the purchase of the land prior to the transaction being completed. Such disclosure enables the purchaser to engage in meaningful negotiation with the vender to ensure that he has the resources to meet his liabilities.

Furthermore such disclosure would mean that NRM notices served on the new landowner would not come as a surprise so placing the officer in the role of the "enemy". NRM officers could then be seen as an advisor and supporter so facilitating effective weed control.

Our proposal

That the NRM Act require that prior to listing of property for sale an authorized weeds officer or registered adviser undertake an inspection to determine the weed status of the property together with a control program which includes a time frame for the work and an estimate of the costs involved. This inspection report to form part of the landowner's statements which are provided to all prospective purchasers. The cost of this inspection and report is to be borne by the vendor. The high turn over of land on the Fleurieu would ensure the success of the control program.

2) Greater Responsibility provided to Local Control Officers

a) **Support and Confidence**

At the present time enforcement of notices is made almost null and void because of the time delay imposed upon local officers by the central office who require referral of enforcement to central officers who do not understand the conditions present at the local level. These include climatic conditions, property owner attitude, geographical conditions and past history. This results in time delays where somebody in Adelaide directs that further time be given to the landowner to comply, frequently resulting in seeding occurring (1 years seed, 10 years weed).

Our proposal

Confidence should be shown in local officers to make decisions in respect to local matters, and intrinsic support given to them in situations of conflict with recalcitrant landowners. Our experience is that local officers deserve this confidence and support.

b) **Resourcing**

Until local resources are mobilized some form of Government funding will be required. At present local boards are aware of thousands of properties infested with Salvation Jane but are only able to issue a few hundred notices. This would suggest gross under staffing of the board and ensures that no matter what good intentions the NRM may have they are doomed to failure.

Our proposal

The Government fund additional officers or registered advisers for effective weed control until the NRM levy is introduced. From then on Government resourcing would cease and the operation be supported by funds generated by the proposed levy. For example, a budget estimate of \$100,000 for an additional officer would only represent approximately \$1 per property assessment in the Fleurieu Region.

c) **Cost Recovery for Control Measures**

The NRM currently experiences difficulty in recovering the cost of any control measures undertaken on a property.

Our proposal

Amend the NRM act to make all control measure costs a charge against the land to which they relate. The provisions which apply in the Local Government Act to non payment of rates should also be extended to such cost recovery; that is, if a debt remains unpaid for three years that the NRM has power to sell the property and recover the debt.

Past experience has shown that this method of charge has promoted a recognition of responsibility and as a result most debts are paid in full or by installments without resorting to the need to execute the sale provisions of the Act.

3) **Roadside Weed Control**

Under the current NRM Act section 182(7) the relevant NRM authority is responsible for controlling declared plants on roadsides. Landowners are responsible for the cost of such control works. Additionally, under the NRM Act, the cost of roadside weed control can only be assigned as a debt to the landowner and not against the land as provided in the previous Act. This results in a costly debt recovery process, lengthy operational and administrative processes with consequent inefficient use of resources.

Our proposal

Councils take over responsibility for roadsides and are funded from the NRM Levy for this work. This has many advantages:

1. There is only one entity involved in the process
2. Councils are experienced in engaging contractors and administering contractual obligations.
3. Quality assurance standards are in place to ensure that contractors of high standard of work are available to be engaged by the council.
4. The advantage of using Council in this way is that the community knows and recognizes this entity as the body which works for the betterment of the community and is easily accessed by them.

4) **The Role of Local Government in Weed Control**

We believe that the potential contribution of Local Government to successful weed control is yet to be realised. Local Government is in the unique position of being the interface between the community and the administrative functions of Government. It is highly visible and interacts with the community as part of its day to day operation. In contrast NRM Boards have not and are unlikely to achieve that level of interaction.

NRM Boards with their expertise and resources formulate policies which are promoted to the community. This promotion would be greatly enhanced through close cooperation and liaison with Local Government. In reality this represents an opportunity to market the work of NRM to the community in a way which is not achieved at present.

In other words, Local Government becomes an important marketing arm for NRM. Councils are constantly communicating with their rate payers and NRM would benefit enormously from joining with councils in these efforts.

Our proposal

Local Councils become an important marketing arm of NRM. This has many advantages:

1. Constantly brings NRM issues before the community through the medium of Local Council, saving NRM Boards advertising costs.
2. Provides a known “shop window” through which the community can initiate enquiries about NRM.
3. Local Councils would be better informed concerning the programs and policies of NRM thus assisting them to manage the region in accord with those policies.
4. Council’s role as a marketing arm and responsibility for roadsides will greatly assist the achievement of common objectives.
5. Councils would include a field in the quarterly rate notice to advise property owners of their outstanding liabilities arising from weed control carried out by NRM Boards. This would greatly assist the recovery of outstanding debts to NRM.

Yours faithfully,

Geoff Davis
Chairman
Fleurieu Beef Group Inc.

MISSION RE NRM'S PERCEIVED FAILURES/SHORTCOMINGS.

WATER LEVY.

As everyone knows and for very good reason RURAL PROPERTY is exempt from Land Tax in the state of SA.

NRM will gladly boast how they have UNBUNDLED rural property into 2 segments – land and water, and in the process imposed what is effectively a land tax on the water component.

In our circumstance we have not irrigated once in the past 15 years and due to changing economics i.e. increased electricity costs, will not be doing so in the future.

Despite this our annual NRM tax for water is \$690 p.a.

We have attempted to on-sell our allocation, only to find it has minimal or no value in our area, hence our efforts to date have been unsuccessful.

In these circumstances we are strongly of the view that a "holding license" category should be created whereby no rural property/water tax is payable.

NRM EXPENDITURE

We also object strongly to the way NRM spend much of the tax raised when so little is done in areas of environmental improvement such as weed control, soil erosion etc.

It appears most expenditure occurs on NRM administrative needs and other government department requirements.

COMMUNITY ALLIENATION

Over the past 15 years we have witnessed the NRM paying lip service to the consultative process and completely ignoring community advice and recommendations.

Many submissions have been put by various organisations eg. Fleurieu Beef Group Inc.; only to be ignored without even the courtesy of a response. This condescending behavior on behalf of NRM only engenders increasing cynicism and dismay within the broader community.

ENVIRONMENTAL BETTERMENT

Should the broader community have expectations of environmental betterment, then it is only reasonable and fair that the whole community should meet the cost of same,

rather than burden a select few farmers with water levies solely on the basis that they choose to irrigate or maintain the right to do so.


LOW FLOW BYPASSES

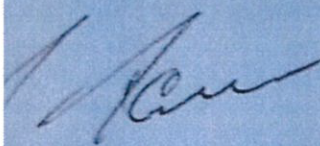
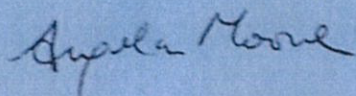
The \$15M Commonwealth Grant monies currently being expended on experimental technology across 11 sites is scandalous in the extreme when everybody with an ounce of common sense knows that:

1. It doesn't work
2. The prohibitive cost of implementation on a broader scale cannot be justified.

SUMMARY

The Water Levy is seen as yet another way the government can raise additional taxes and further quash any incentive to farm.

Richard Lawrence & Angela Moore. 

Parliamentary Select Committee – Sustainable Farming Practices – Victor Harbor – 19th October 2012.

Attachment to section 813 of my testimony.

For future food security we must reserve quality agricultural land even if it is supposedly worth \$1.5M for 80 acres. The precedent has already been set in all of our urban areas. Take for example The City of Adelaide where Colonel Light's vision wisely set aside Victoria, Light, Whitmore, Hindmarsh and Hurtle Squares. Any of these Squares could be worth say \$1B an acre if valued by "Market Forces", but they are reserved for other purposes that insulate them from such forces. Government Legislation protects and prevents their use for commercial or alternative developments

The same could be said for example concerning the streets in Adelaide, where in wisdom wide streets have been planned and are the envy of other cities such as Sydney. If these streets had not been protected, rather been left exposed to market forces, their high dollar value per square metre would have opened the flood gates for narrowing, making room for "profitable development opportunities".

Even in our personal lives we often do not value or change things simply on economic potential or market force pressures. No man who loves his wife would for example, force her into prostitution on the basis that a superior income could supposedly be earned. No there are many areas of our lives and communities that are exempt from market forces by decision. Sustainable agriculture demands that Governing Authorities make the decision to protect quality agricultural land from these market forces that would permanently destroy their use in food production.

Australia is a relatively large continent but with one of the lowest rainfalls. Much of the most productive land lies within 100-200 km of the coast, especially in South Australia. Added to this is the population drift to coastal regions, the dreaded "Sea Change". The demographics of such a mix makes it obvious that conflicts involving agriculture will occur and "Market Forces" destroy the most productive land.

We believe the thinking in Government at all levels must change to the protection of agricultural land in all future planning decisions. It is an urgent matter for Governments to turn their thinking to the hierarchy of human needs as displayed in Maslow's Triangle, where agriculture is situated in the preeminent position, at the base of all human existence.

Mark Higgins.

Attention: The Independent Facilitator - Landscape Reform.

I welcome the opportunity to tender the following comments:

1. What is working 'well'?

- In short, 'nothing of any note', except ALIENATION of the rural community, due in large part to the disastrous implementation of water licensing. Ongoing taxation of same will only 'taint and /or stain' any future reforms that might be implemented.

2. What would you like to change?

- An instant moratorium on licensing fees. A landholder maintaining the 'right to irrigate' solely for the purpose of irrigating during an extended dry period, is no reason to tax that prudent drought proofing measure on an ongoing annual basis.
- One step in the right direction could be the introduction of a 'holding licence' exempt from levies when the water allocation is not being used in any given year.
- The appointment of an 'animal, pest, plant control, officer' attached to each Council who is sufficiently skilled to be able to work with the rural community for the betterment of all concerned. Currently the City of Victor Harbor Council is having to fund its own roadside weed control on State managed roads. (Where is the NRM?).

3. Boundaries.

- The Fleurieu requires its own Board and the area of control should commence at the top of Willunga Hill and extend to Cape Jarvis, using the existing boundary to the east. Combining with the Hills/Alexandrina area, I believe, would be most unwise as it would inevitably lead to duplication of Boards overseeing the same catchment area.
- The Fleurieu has its own unique issues (e.g. feral deer population, Cape Tulip weed infestation etc.) which requires focussed attention and not have such issues diminished or downgraded when combined with other proposed Landscape Board Areas.

4. My involvement.

- Given my age, my involvement will be limited to looking after my own property free of any NRM bureaucracy, red tape and other such trash that has been served up over the past 15 years.

Richard Lawrence.
FBG Member.
Inman Valley.

Melissa, a few points for the NRM submission

- 1) Millions spent over 20 years on the southern emu wren but no policy on cat or fox control. Both of which are recognized as having a huge effect on native fauna.
- 2) Fleurieu swamps fenced but no follow up weed control inside the areas or maintenance of exclusion fencing.
- 3) No local input from farmers or people of the district
- 4) District officers set up large projects instead of spreading funds over whole of district. Officers spend significant amounts of time at "meetings" & "courses" to benefit themselves.
- 5) Huge number of staff, vehicles & officers in the area soaking up funds instead of using money for environment.
- 6) New mechanism has to be run costs effective "Boards" are expensive to run and can be swamped by "interest groups" who are only interested in small area of the environment instead of the whole area.

Regards

Stephen Rogers.

Fleurieu Beef Group Inc.
c/o E C Phillipson & Co
GPO Box 216
Adelaide
S.A. 5001



W.J.(Bill) Davies
Director
Land & Biodiversity Services, DWLBC
17/2/2006

RE: Synopsis of the Issues

- 1) Land use must never be used as the criterion by which land degradation is considered acceptable or unacceptable. For example, lifestyle/Horse Blocks must exercise the same duty of care to the environment and neighbours as those who have commercial interest/productions. Furthermore, weed spread is an issue as serious as spray drift and contamination of non GMO. by GMO.
- 2) Land must never be viewed as a commodity to be traded at will, whilst it is degraded to save costs, and finally dumped.
Land ownership in itself carries privileges and responsibilities which must be exercised in the national interests.
- 3) Whilst some Government funds may be required initially to resource the weeds officers "to take hold of the horse that has bolted", the aim is local needs to be met by local resources. These local resources though already in place, are untapped.

The most important local resource is the landowners themselves, who as a consequence of land division, are an ever increasing number. Thus the area of land that each owner is responsible for is on average decreasing. This massive labour force, when mobilized by education and awareness, combined with their own monetary resources, would be the single greatest asset to effective weed control. At present this human resource is viewed as a liability.

The present failure is that whilst financial resources have been provided by landowners to pay for ever increasing land values, less and less of this available financial resource has been employed in actual care of the land.

- 4) In recent years both Federal and State Governments have expressed publicly their support and commitment to policy that reflects a "Duty of care to the community and the Environment". All of the above support that commitment at the "expense" of self interest.

Yours faithfully,

Geoff Davis
Chairman
Fleurieu Beef Group Inc.

Department for Environment and Water

Submission in response to the discussion paper *Managing our Landscapes: Conversations for Change*



SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WINE INDUSTRY
ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

SUBMISSION OF: SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WINE INDUSTRY
ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

ABN: 43 807 200 928

ADDRESS: First Floor, Industry Offices
National Wine Centre
Botanic Road
ADELAIDE SA 5000

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DATE: 15 October 2018

Submissions by 15 October 2018 to:
The Independent Facilitator
Landscape Reform
GPO Box 1047
ADELAIDE SA 5001.
Email: LandscapeReform@sa.gov.au

South Australian Wine Industry Association Incorporated

ABN 43 807 200 928

1st Floor Industry Offices, National Wine Centre, Botanic Road, Adelaide SA 5000

Tel: 61 8 8222 9277 Fax: 61 8 8222 9276 Email: admin@winesa.asn.au Web: www.winesa.asn.au

SUMMARY OF SUBMISSION

The South Australian Wine Industry Association Incorporated (SAWIA) is supportive of reform that improves outcomes in natural resources management, however, there are some aspects of the proposal and discussion paper that are of concern:

- The discussion paper uses some very vague terminology and language that make it difficult for us to understand sufficiently to provide a detailed response.
- The proposed reform needs to be clearly targeted at specific issues requiring improvement, and those are not clear to us from the discussion paper.
- More detail is required about how the reforms will be applied in practice, especially in regard to governance, administrative processes and funding mechanisms.
- We are concerned that the proposed reform may not address the disturbing past trend of 'cost-shifting' that, in our opinion, may have diminished the funding available for on-ground activities.

THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WINE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

SAWIA is an industry employer association representing the interests of wine grape growers and wine producers throughout the state of South Australia.

SAWIA is a not for profit incorporated association, funded by voluntary member subscriptions, grants and fee for service activities, whose mission is to provide leadership to South Australian grape and wine industry businesses so they achieve great things that they couldn't by themselves.

SAWIA membership represents approximately 96% of the grapes crushed in South Australia and about 40% of the land under viticulture. Each major wine region within South Australia is represented on the board governing our activities.

SAWIA has a strong track record as an industry leader and innovator in many areas. SAWIA pro-actively represents members and the greater wine industry with government and related agencies in a wide variety of aspects of business in the wine sector.

SUBMISSION

SAWIA is pleased to be able to comment on discussion paper *Managing our Landscapes: Conversations for Change* (the 'Discussion paper') that was published on the South Australian government's *YourSay* [website](#).

General comments

The wine sector is highly dependant on the health of natural resources on which it relies, and therefore, SAWIA recognises and supports efforts to maintain and protect these vital assets.

SAWIA also recognises the view that there have been shortcomings in natural resource management (NRM) in the past, and considers that any reform should be highly focussed and targeted at addressing these in order to improve outcomes. In short, if reforms are to be made, then we wish to see what changes they will make, and the deliverables of improved natural resource management as outcomes.

Some of the shortcomings that we have observed in the past include:

- declining funding being available to regions for on-ground activities, which might be due in part to shifting the cost burden from the government and on to the current NRM regional Boards (e.g. for water allocation planning services), and
- centralisation of decision making with associated administrative costs.

As a general comment, the discussion paper uses terminology that is quite vague and general in nature, and in our opinion, it could be describing any reform proposal. For example, it is not clear as to what exactly will make the system "simple and accessible", nor what that actually means in practice. This makes it difficult for us to understand the changes and assess the appropriateness and likely true impact of the proposed reforms on the wine sector. We would like to see further detailed information in order to better form an opinion.

We note that the discussion paper states that "the current system of natural resource management is not delivering what it should". This implies that some work on identifying the problems has been undertaken, yet the discussion paper does not clearly articulate what they are. Without a clear and transparent description of the issues, it is very difficult for us to be confident that the proposed reforms will address the root causes.

We make some comments about the principles and some of the specific questions that are posed in the discussion paper.

Responses to the discussion paper

1. *The guiding principles*

In general, the guiding principles appear to have the potential to make for a sound and sensible approach to natural resource management, but some of them require more detail as to how they will apply in practice.

On the issue of "Decentralised decision making", it is laudable to require funds raised in a region to be spent in that region, but the need for equity in funding availability according to need and the greater good in instances of multi-regional management priorities immediately creates the need for some form of centralised control and equalisation mechanism.

The proposal suggests that this will be addressed by the two funding programs (i.e. Landscape Priorities Fund, and Grassroots Grants), but it is not clear that this will create any more efficiency in the use of levy funds than currently exists, and potentially could create further barriers to projects or even increase administration costs. For example, our experience with similar types of funding and grants programs has been that, due to the extensive processes for applications, assessments, approvals, contracts and reporting, quite often funds are not distributed and used in a timely or effective manner.

The “Back to basics” principle puts three key issues as the major priorities: soil, water, and pests. Whilst these aspects most likely contribute towards the goal of achieving “vibrant biodiversity” (i.e. one of the three aims of the proposed reforms), it is questioned as to what objective evidence exists to support these as the most materially important ones, and why ‘habitat’ has not been included on equal standing.

We note however, that “revegetation” is listed as one of the “other stewardship priorities”, whereas vegetation protection does not seem to appear.

On the other hand, we would welcome the “streamlining of water allocation planning”, but there is little detail on how the proposed reforms will achieve this. We are aware of significant frustrations within the wine sector around the extraordinary length of time taken, the process intensive, and in some instances a lack of transparency, in developing past water allocation plans.

2. Landscape Boards

We believe that good governance underpins good outcomes, and this requires attention to all the management processes including appointments, finance, operational efficiency, and reporting. Because of a lack of detail in the discussion paper about proposed governance mechanisms, we are not convinced that these issues have been thoroughly evaluated and understood. We would like to see the aspects of governance better explained in order for us to have confidence in the proposed reforms.

SAWIA recognises the need for the Boards to have autonomy and, importantly, to have appropriately skilled members. Equally, the governance processes need to be robust, and further detail is required in relation to the proposed processes of making appointments to the Boards.

In the case of the elected members, the costs of the election process must be outlined in more detail, as well as how that will be resourced (i.e. the funding of elections should not be at the expense of the levies raised for activities in the region).

3. The levy system and funding

The significant rises in levies in recent years has been a source of frustration and anger for levy-payers. Whilst we are not aware of all the root causes of this, we understand that some part of it is due to the shifting of some costs to the NRM Boards (e.g. for water allocation planning services, as mentioned previously), thereby diminishing the funding available for on-ground activities.

We suggest that this should be examined and rectified as a higher priority than the proposed capping mechanisms. We would also caution that establishing a regulatory process for the levies will inevitably lead to increased administrative cost burden to all stakeholders, ourselves included, especially due to the need for increased engagement in consultation processes.

End of submission

Hon David Speirs
Level 10, 81-95
Waymouth Street,
ADELAIDE SA 5000
landscapereform@sa.gov.au

15 October 2018

Dear Minister,

Re - NRM Reform in South Australia

Your proposed reform agenda to replace the current NRM Act with a more responsive, simpler and community involved Landscape SA Act has been enthusiastically received by Agriculture Kangaroo Island (AgKI). AgKI is the peak primary producer's organisation on Kangaroo Island and we have had a long association of working with all tiers of government and the private sector to enhance both the profitability and sustainability of primary industries on the Island.

Decentralised decision making

We fully support the notion to decentralise decision making and giving greater empowerment for the community to determine the direction of natural resource management in their regions. It is hoped that the Government will liaise closely with the key existing community organisations (and in particular farming systems groups like AgKI) who have considerable knowledge of their region, land management issues and key priorities.

A simple and accessible system

We look forward to straightforward systems with less red tape and complex compliance requirements. The majority of landholders wish to follow due processes and understand that transparency and accountability are essential. But, complex systems, unnecessary 'paperwork' and working with bureaucrats who have limited understanding of farming systems can at times be frustrating and lead to negative outcomes.

A whole of landscape approach and back to basics

As farmers, we are responsible for managing the largest area of natural resources on KI. We fully understand and recognise the importance of the triple bottom line, the need to consider the environmental, economic and social considerations in every decision we make. On KI we are justifiably proud of the high adoption of the Landcare ethic amongst our farmers.

Comments on specific reform topics:

1. Landscape Boards

-
- We support the formation of nine boards and in particular support the notion to retain Kangaroo Island as its own region
 - We question the reasoning behind reducing board membership from 9 to 7. The smaller the membership the harder it is to guarantee a quorum. If the boards are to truly reflect the community we would hope that more farmers and business people will become member. Such people have complex lives that will not be able to guarantee attendance at all meetings.
 - We are concerned with the possibility of members being elected via a popular vote as this may discount some people from nominating, as they do not have the time or inclination to run a campaign to garner votes. One of the keys strengths of the current NRM boards is the strong emphasis placed on skills. The popular vote option does not guarantee the appropriate cross section of skills, experience and local community knowledge.
- 2. What can be included in the new legislation to enable better stewardship of our landscapes?**
- We draw your attention to the attached paper 'NVC Draft for Consideration' which was developed on KI in 2014. It provides a new way of dealing with NRM issues in a more holistic manner

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed reform of the NRM sector. We look forward to working with you and the wider community in developing this new model.

Yours sincerely

Agriculture Kangaroo Island

The Independent Facilitator
Landscape Reform
GPO Box 1047
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Monday 15 October 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the impending NRM reforms and the new *Landscape South Australia* legislation.

A key priority for Primary Producers SA remains:

- **Re-empowerment of regions** – including
 - re-empowerment of Landscape Boards (greater autonomy and decision-making ability) to
 - control their budgets,
 - employ staff and to engage contractors as appropriate, including industry groups and other non-government organisations, and
 - set regional priorities, for example.

The water planning and management cost recovery from regional budgets needs to be discontinued. Regional budgets will, in most cases, include water planning and management expenditure *where it is identified as a priority at the regional level*. Where agreed by regional boards, this could include cross-regional work. However, any additional expenditure required – which is prioritised at a statewide level – should be funded by the SA Government or other sources. We are aware that these costs are already substantially funded by SA Water payments and the commitment by Treasury to cover the cessation of the River Murray levy.

The imposition of significant additional costs on regions seriously undermines the principles of decentralised decision making and re-empowerment of regions. This also adds to the difficulty in recruiting suitable candidates for board positions.

For similar reasons, we further strongly recommend that the proposed Grassroots Grants and Landscape Priorities Fund should be funded by Greening Adelaide (or the South Australian Government and/or other sources) – *not* from regional Landscape Board budgets. We note that there was input from the Adelaide consultation sessions which indicated a willingness for urban levies to fund statewide and regional activities.

Along with other NRM stakeholders, we have observed decreases in South Australian Government investment while NRM levies have increased. There is a need to reverse this trend of declining SA Government investment into such an important area.

We would like to acknowledge the importance of successfully passing the new legislation through both houses of Parliament in a timely manner. With this in mind, we believe that water management provisions will need to continue to be included in the new Bill. The legislation being drafted will need to establish a robust, fair, streamlined and enabling framework, addressing the key dot points above. A schedule should be set to address some of the more controversial or complex issues in more detail, following the enactment of the new legislation.

Water management is a priority area for primary producers and the legislation should incorporate the flexibility for Landscape Boards and regions to utilise the most appropriate tools for water planning and management.

We query the need for the legislation to prescribe timeframes for both regional Landscape Plans and Water Allocation Plans. This is aligned with queries we have raised, over a period of time, about the effectiveness of some of the investment into NRM planning processes. We prefer efficient, responsive and streamlined processes, focused on on-ground outcomes.

There will be more work to be done in the area of water management following the introduction of the new legislation. We suggest that some key water planning and management issues be addressed by making a commitment to timeframes for the commencement of this work (at a minimum). A number of these will be specific to one or more Water Allocation Plans (or water resources). However there will most likely be a need, at the conclusion of this work, to consider whether any amendments to the legislation are required.

Landscape Boards

Concerns have been raised about the election of Landscape Board members on the basis of both cost and the potential outcomes of elections in terms of board composition and implications for the effective functioning of the boards, particularly if voter turnout and participation in elections is low.

With either low levels of nominations (especially three or less) or low voter turnout, the result could be board members who do not have required skills or knowledge and/or are not able to contribute constructively to the Board and regional governance. The combination of elected and appointed members could make it difficult to get the required mix of skills and knowledge too; even if four appointments are made following the election of three board members (e.g. if a geographical spread of members is being sought).

It could also be difficult to deal with or remove disruptive elected members. We note that alternative proposals have been made for the recruitment of members. For example, regional representatives of the key regional stakeholders could select three board members.

It will be critical that Landscape Board members have a deep understanding not only of NRM issues in their region, but also of socio-economic factors and drivers and production systems.

Animal and plant control

There is a need to carefully explore the ability to adequately address animal and plant control challenges within the new legislative framework. Landscape Boards should have the ability to prioritise weeds and pest animals in their region and to respond to key threats in a timely manner.

Biodiversity / native vegetation

We note that some regions, such as the SA Arid Lands region, have received significant amounts of funding from the Australian Government to undertake or support activities for biodiversity outcomes. The new legislation should enable these types of activities to continue, particularly where they facilitate additional investment in a region.

Soil and land management

Soil and land management remain critical components of the management of natural resources; with practical research, development, extension and adoption activities being delivered by local and regional farming systems groups, for example. It should be noted that the capacity of such groups to deliver engagement and outcomes is not limited to soil and land management.

The submission by the Ag Excellence Alliance outlines well the capacity of the grower group network (with 16 grower groups within the Ag Excellence Alliance and a focus on broadacre agriculture). Similarly, there are networks and groups within the more intensive sectors (for example: Dairy SA; Pork SA; horticultural organisations, groups and networks; and wine grape grower organisations, groups and networks).

Management of climate variability provides ongoing challenges to both primary producers and natural environments, within and outside the NRM system.

In addition, we note that court processes should only be used as a “last resort” option, bearing in mind the very high public and private costs of these processes (and therefore cost inefficiency in achieving outcomes, except in the very worst cases where there needs to be a public penalty/disincentive). There have been examples of both water and native vegetation issues where the ability to negotiate further could have produced much better and more cost-effective outcomes.

Our responses to some of the questions posed in the discussion paper are attached in the Appendix.

We look forward to ongoing involvement and discussions on these matters.

For more information or to discuss this matter further, please don't hesitate to contact Rob Kerin on 0439 933 103 or robkerin@gmail.com or Joe Keynes on 0428 648 235 or keyneton@activ8.net.au.

Yours sincerely



Rob Kerin
Independent Chair
Primary Producers SA



Joe Keynes
Chair, NRM Committee
Primary Producers SA

Appendix: Responses to discussion paper questions

1. *What is most important to you in managing natural resources?*

- **Re-empowerment of regions** – including
 - re-empowerment of Landscape Boards (greater autonomy) to
 - control their budgets and
 - employ staff and to engage contractors as appropriate, including industry groups and other non-government organisations, for example.
- NRM levy charges need to be contained at the lowest reasonable and sustainable level, including through appropriate levels of investment from the SA Government and Australian Government.
- **Water management** – incorporating the flexibility for Landscape Boards to utilise the most appropriate tools for water planning and management. More work will need to be done in the area of water management following the introduction of the new legislation.
- **Animal and plant control** provisions – giving the ability to adequately and promptly address animal and plant control challenges within the new legislative framework and considering the tools required.
- The potential to further incorporate **native vegetation** management provisions (particularly those currently residing in the *Native Vegetation Act and Regulations*) at a later date if appropriate.
- **Soil and land management** remain critical components; with practical research, development, extension and adoption activities being delivered by local and regional farming systems groups, for example.
- Management of climate variability provides ongoing challenges to both primary producers and natural environments, within and outside the NRM system.

2. *What do you think is working well about how we manage natural resources?*

The “NRM Partners” forum (NRM Boards, PPSA, Conservation Council of SA, Landcare Association of SA, LGA, Aboriginal representative/SANTS, Department for Environment and Water, PIRSA) is working well and should be retained, along with regular meetings of the Landscape Board presiding members and staff across all regions working in specific areas (e.g. water management, animal and plant control, land management, planning).

- Investment which supports local and regional farming systems/producer groups

3. *What do you think should be changed about how we manage natural resources?*

- **Re-empowerment of regions** – including via
 - re-empowerment of Landscape SA boards (greater autonomy) to
 - control their budgets and
 - employ staff (and to engage contractors as appropriate, including industry groups and other non-government organisations, for example)
- The legislation being drafted will need to establish a robust, fair, streamlined and enabling framework, addressing the key dot points above. The legislation should be less prescriptive to Landscape Boards, allowing them to determine their planning timeframes, water management and animal and plant control priorities, tools and strategies, for example; while allowing for good coordination and communication between the regions in order to seek consistency across the regions, where possible.

It will therefore be critical that Landscape Board members have a deep understanding not only of NRM issues in their region, but also of socio-economic factors and drivers and production systems.

- We hope that these changes will enable the recruitment of appropriate people from the primary production sector onto Landscape Boards.
- A schedule to address some of the more controversial or complex issues in more detail, following the enactment of the new legislation, is also recommended.
- That court processes should only be used as a “last resort” option, bearing in mind the very high public and private costs of these processes (and therefore cost inefficiency in achieving outcomes, except in the very worst cases where there needs to be a public penalty/disincentive).

4. *How do you think we can best enable landscape scale restoration projects?*

There have been a number of discussions about funding arrangements – linking this to questions 13 and 15.

There is significant concern about funding being appropriated from regions/regional boards to pay for statewide programs (adding the proposed Grassroots Grants and Landscape Priorities Fund on top of the existing water planning and management “cost recovery”) – and what this will leave regions. This is also linked with concerns about the financial viability of some regions.

As mentioned in the cover letter, we believe the water planning and management cost recovery from regional budgets needs to be discontinued. Regional budgets will, in most cases, include water planning and management expenditure *where this is identified as a priority at the regional level*. Where agreed by regional boards, this could include cross-regional work. However, any additional expenditure required – which is prioritised at a statewide level – should be funded by the SA Government or other sources.

For similar reasons, we further strongly recommend that the proposed Grassroots Grants and Landscape Priorities Fund should be funded by Greening Adelaide (or the South Australian Government and/or other sources) – *not* from regional Landscape Board budgets.

Along with other NRM stakeholders, we have observed decreases in South Australian Government investment while NRM levies have increased. There is a need to reverse this trend of declining SA Government investment into such an important area.

Regional Landscape Boards should be able to choose whether and when they invest levy funds in cross-regional initiatives.

There are obviously other elements which can facilitate cross-regional work (beyond funding arrangements), starting with fundamental good collaboration between regions and the various stakeholders. There are already good examples of this. The continuation of the NRM/Landscape Partners group, meetings of the regional presiding members of Landscape Boards and statewide meetings of regional staff on specific topics (e.g. planning, water, animal and plant control – along with Biosecurity SA) should help to enable and continue these types of collaboration.

5. *How do you think we can better recognise and promote Aboriginal peoples’ land, water, economic and cultural interests?*

We defer to Aboriginal people and groups/organisations to best answer this question.

6. *How can Landscape Boards best facilitate the management of natural resources by their communities?*

See also question 3. We have suggested “a streamlined approach” (less spending on PR, plans, reports and glossy documents and more on practical, on-ground measures) and good engagement of industry and grower/farming systems groups, including outsourcing activities where appropriate (which may include communications and engagement activities).

7. *What do you think is the best approach for electing the three community members to the Landscape Board in each region?*

Concerns have been raised about the election of Landscape Board members on the basis of:

- Cost – including time and effort and taking into account the cost as a proportion of a region's budget; and
- The potential outcomes of elections in terms of board composition/membership and implications for the effective functioning of the boards – particularly if voter turnout/participation in elections is low.

It will be critical that Landscape Board members have a deep understanding not only of NRM issues in their region, but also of socio-economic factors and drivers and production systems.

We note proposals for members to instead be appointed by a combination of:

- Nominations by peak bodies
- A selection process and panel composed of regional representatives appropriate to a region, incorporating nominations from the peak bodies (to the selection panel)

with skill and knowledge requirements identified and applied.

9. *How can regional planning be streamlined?*

We query the need for the legislation to prescribe timeframes for both regional Landscape Plans and Water Allocation Plans. This is aligned with queries we have raised, over a period of time, about the effectiveness of some of the investment into NRM planning processes. We prefer efficient, responsive and streamlined processes, focused on on-ground outcomes.

Planning processes should focus more on the engagement to develop a plan (or policy) and the policy that results than a glossy or long document. It may be appropriate in a number of instances to be able to revise parts of plans (or specific policies), as required, rather than whole plans.

10. *How can regional plans be more accessible to the community, while becoming more consistent in format and terminology?*

Again this is probably more about processes and policies than documents. Less prescriptive timeframes may result in much better and responsive engagement. Face to face engagement via existing networks (and with flexible timeframes) has often produced better outcomes than sending out large documents and expecting engagement on those documents within relatively short, set timeframes.

Good communication, coordination and collaboration between the regions (e.g. sharing of drafts and final policies and plans across regions and cross-regional discussions) is important. The NRM/Landscape Partners group (including presiding members of Landscape Boards) could consider drafts – including with a particular view to highlighting any significant inconsistencies between regions or water resources.

11. *How do we best measure and report outcomes from managing natural resources?*

Previous surveys have highlighted that confidence regarding NRM science (especially for water planning and management) is not as good as it should be within the primary producer community. Engagement of the primary producer community and industry networks across all NRM science (including monitoring and reporting) needs to be improved – probably at a range of levels – to increase this confidence. Some of the much better examples demonstrate extensive engagement of local communities on local issues.

12. *How important is it to have more consistency in the way land and water levies are raised across the state?*

Discussions at the NRM Partners forum have highlighted preferences for regional boards to be able to determine their own levy rates (while ensuring that comparisons are made as part of this process). The NRM/Landscape Partners group (including presiding members of Landscape Boards) could also consider levy proposals – including with a view to highlighting any particular inconsistencies.

13. *How can we best fund high priority landscape scale projects?*

See also question 4. How do we identify high priority landscape scale projects? In addition to voluntary collaboration between regions, is there a possible role here for the NRM/Landscape Partners group (including the Landscape Board presiding members)?

Grower groups / farming systems groups, industry and community groups and networks should be engaged appropriately – across both planning and delivery of these types of projects (as appropriate).

14. *How important is it to coordinate efforts to manage our natural resources across regions? How could this best be achieved?*

This has been addressed in some of the previous questions.

15. *How could a Grassroots Grants program best work?*

See also question 4.

16. *What are the highest priority ways we could improve pest plant and animal control?*

The legislation should enable Landscape Boards to determine their planning timeframes and appropriate animal and plant control priorities, tools and strategies to respond to key threats in a timely manner; while allowing for good coordination and communication between the regions. Biosecurity SA would work closely with the NRM/Landscape Partners group, as well as Landscape Boards and cross-regional animal and plant control staff.

The issue of overabundant native species is of critical importance and should also be part of the remit of Landscape Boards and the NRM/Landscape Partners group. We note that this currently resides with the *National Parks and Wildlife Act*.

See also question 21.

17. *Are there any minor amendments that could be made in this Bill to current water management processes?*

It is important that provisions which apply to the River Murray aren't necessarily automatically applied to other, very different water resources, without carefully thinking through the most appropriate management regimes for each resource (taking into account the knowledge base, resourcing and all of the features specific to each resource) – but that regions have the flexibility to use the most appropriate management tools for each resource.

As highlighted above, we query the need for the legislation to prescribe timeframes for both regional Landscape Plans and Water Allocation Plans. This is aligned with queries we have raised, over a period of time, about the effectiveness of some of the investment into NRM planning processes. We prefer efficient, responsive and streamlined processes, focused on on-ground outcomes.

18. *What more substantial water reform do you believe should be looked at as part of subsequent reform processes?*

As mentioned above, a schedule should be set to address some of the more controversial or complex issues in more detail, following the enactment of the new legislation.

There will be more work to be done in the area of water management following the introduction of the new legislation. We suggest that some key water planning and management issues be addressed by making a commitment to timeframes for the commencement of this work (at a minimum). A number of these issues will be specific to one or more Water Allocation Plans (or water resources). However there will most likely be a need, at the conclusion of this work, to consider whether any amendments to the legislation are required.

A submission has been made previously by Primary Producers SA on the Department's Better Water Planning and Management discussion paper, after conducting a water planning and management survey. Other submissions have also been made already on water planning and management issues. We would be happy to provide further input or materials, and to discuss these issues in much more detail.

19. *What should be included in the new legislation to enable more effective management of our soils, pest plants and animals?*

See also question 16 above and questions 20 and 21 below.

20. *What should be included in the new legislation to enable better stewardship of our landscapes?*

There are currently a few different incentives variously available to primary producers in different parts of SA, including: various regional and subregional NRM incentive programs (funded by NRM Boards); native vegetation clearance offset payments (Significant Environmental Benefits or SEBs); and, potentially, Emissions Reduction Fund payments.

The cumulative effect of these various programs might be better coordinated to reach, and be accessible to, primary producers. Where appropriate, NRM incentives might be made available more consistently to all primary producers across SA (but without losing the ability for regions to identify and fund specific regional or subregional needs).

Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitators and/or sustainable agriculture officers might be further enabled to assist primary producers to access any of these opportunities through streamlined processes, noting that primary producers require support with regulatory requirements too (such as water policies and licensing, native vegetation management regulations and animal and plant control requirements).

The incentive program/s also require science and technology support to demonstrate effective techniques in local areas and assess the local and financial viability of actions for incentives on offer and possible responses to regulations.

In the area of native vegetation management and biodiversity outcomes, in particular, there may be potential to draw in additional investment (e.g. from NGOs, philanthropic investors) into a system which can demonstrate a range of NRM outcomes. We need to connect primary producers in SA into the range of opportunities, where appropriate.

We note that healthy financial circumstances (for landholders) increase capacity for good landscape stewardship. To this end, we reiterate that NRM levy charges need to be contained at the lowest reasonable and sustainable level, including through appropriate levels of investment from the SA Government and Australian Government.

Keeping government costs at the lowest reasonable and sustainable level will help primary producers to remain viable, profitable and cost-competitive (e.g. with overseas and interstate producers) and increase capacity to invest in landscape management.

21. *How do you think the new legislation can best enable effective compliance arrangements?*

We have noted previously that court processes should only be used as a “last resort” option, bearing in mind the very high public and private costs of these processes (and therefore cost inefficiency in achieving outcomes, except in the very worst cases where there needs to be a public penalty/disincentive). There have been examples of both water and native vegetation issues where the ability to negotiate further could have produced much better and more cost-effective outcomes.

On the other hand, in areas such as animal and plant control, there is a need to be able to respond promptly to key threats, for example.

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19 October 2018

The Hon David Speirs MP
Minister for Environment and Water
Parliament House SA 5000

Via email: Minister.Speirs@sa.gov.au
cc: LandscapeReform@sa.gov.au

Dear Minister Speirs

Re: Review of the NRM Act and the proposed Landscape SA

Thank you for your letter dated 27th July 2018 regarding information on the review of the NRM Act and the proposed Landscape SA.

Historically the Agricultural Bureau of SA (ABSA) and Government enjoyed a strong relationship in supporting and connecting with the rural sector of South Australia. This connection and activity has changed over the years, however the need for connection and productive outcomes for agriculture and the sustainable management of our natural resources are still important. This following information provides a summary of the mutually beneficial value that Agricultural Bureau of SA can offer to support the implementation of the new Landscape SA arrangements.

Background

The Agricultural Bureau of South Australia is a not-for-profit organisation run by farmers for the rural sector. Membership is for everyone associated with, or interested in; farming, agricultural development and education. ABSA helps strengthen the relationship and information flow between scientist and farmer and assists its members in working together on issues of common interest and benefit to primary production.

The Agricultural Bureau is an integral part of rural communities throughout South Australia and has a proud history in serving agriculture since 1888. There are approximately 1100 members - over 60 active branches - spread across South Australia. Branches meet regularly to exchange ideas, discuss farming practices and issues, and work on common challenges together - most importantly providing a support to each other in their local community.

The strength of the Agricultural Bureau lies in the unique character of our volunteer based organisation. Our members are local groups in local communities with local knowledge, which cover all parts of South Australia. ABSA members are passionate about; agriculture, community and learning, working together for the best outcomes for their businesses, families, communities and the rural sector.

Function of the Agricultural Bureau of SA

- Provide leadership to the Ag Bureau network (regions, branches and members) and encouragement to develop vibrant rural community and industry networks.
- Be an advocate for excellence in agriculture, business management and sustainable natural resource management.
- Develop partnerships with pertinent government departments, agribusinesses and regional organisations that have an impact on agriculture.
- Present ABSA issues, options and solutions to relevant Ministers and agribusiness leaders.
- Be an information conduit for; State and Federal legislation, Research and Development, and Industry information

What the Agricultural Bureau of SA can offer regarding implementation of the new Landscape SA arrangements

The ABSA represents the interests of South Australia's farmers to government and related agencies, as well as contributing to the extension of agricultural research and development through the management of projects and distribution of research outcomes via its member branches. It plays an important knowledge transfer role to farmers in South Australia and is a critical conduit in the broader "two way" information flow process.

Keys areas where ABSA can support Landscape SA are:

1. Sustainable Agriculture
 - a. ABSA members manage a large proportion of our landscape as part of their agricultural enterprises (over 12 million hectares in the agricultural zone)
 - b. A major focus of our Branches is improving productivity and the sustainable management of our farming land and landscape in general
2. Extension
 - a. The ABSA encourages the adoption of improved practices through its various activities, including; trials and demonstrations, field days, guest speakers and robust discussion sessions
 - b. Sharing relevant information independent of commercial and political interest
3. Communication
 - a. In the event of a crisis i.e. dry times, an immediate strategy clicks into action linking the membership and branches as required
 - b. Opportunity for Government to get information out and in via ABSA database
 - c. Regional and local reports

4. Collaboration
 - a. There is an opportunity to improve linkages and partnerships between primary producers, the sustainable agriculture sector and the NRM/Landscape SA sector
 - b. Strong partnerships will enhance the new Landscape SA arrangements
5. Disaster reaction
 - a. Ag Bureau have resources and network already in place to respond to disasters and adverse events
 - b. Local information can be communicated directly back to government and key decision makers
6. Research and Development
 - a. Adoption of technology through uptake of Research and Development (R&D)
 - b. Input into R&D that is relevant at local producer level
 - c. History of project management in collaboration with PIRSA /DEW/ NRM
 - d. Responding to grass root issues
 - e. Short and long term identified concerns / possibilities (forward thinking)
7. Wellbeing
 - a. Community support via local networks and opportunity for social and face-to-face contact
 - b. Crisis response – immediate, personal and targeted response
 - c. Good times to celebrate and learn
 - d. Educate community about farming,

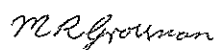
More detailed information about the activities of the Ag Bureau is included in the attached copy of our most recent Annual Report (2017-18).

We believe the Agricultural Bureau of SA can contribute to the sustainable management of South Australia's landscape and natural resources through enhanced collaboration with new Landscape SA Boards and the ABSA network.

I am happy to provide further information as required.

Thank you once again for this opportunity and we look forward to working closely with the new Landscape SA arrangements.

Yours sincerely



MARK GROSSMAN
Chairman, Agricultural Bureau of SA

Encl. Agricultural Bureau 2017/18 Annual Report



AGRICULTURAL BUREAU OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

ANNUAL REPORT

2017-18



ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

CHAIR'S REPORT

Achievements, awards & sponsorships

MEMBER AWARDS

More than 45 members clock up milestones

ROSS REMINISCES

70 years as an Ag Bureau member in our 130th year!



2017-18 HIGHLIGHTS

2018 marks the **130th anniversary of the Ag Bureau of South Australia!** It also marks the 70th year of membership for 92 year-old Ross Roberts (pictured on our front cover), of our Nelshaby branch.

The **Annual General Meeting** was held in Adelaide in October, followed by the **Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards** presentation dinner on 12 October 2017.

The **2017 Rural Youth Bursary** helped Mount Pleasant's Kayla Starkey to progress her dreams of becoming a high school Agricultural Science teacher. Read more about how Kayla has utilised her bursary win on page 12.

The Barossa Valley's Tracy Bonython was awarded the **Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship for Young Farmers** at last year's awards and says it has been "a huge game changer" for her and her family business, Bon Chevon. Tracy shares how the scholarship has helped her to grow their gourmet goat meat business on page 10.

Greg Cock was recognised for his **Services to Primary Production** and longstanding contribution to primary production. Greg's contribution to agriculture over more than 30 years includes leadership roles with PIRSA and the Ag Bureau. He has fostered strong relationships with Ag Bureau members through roles such as leading PIRSA's Regional Advisory Group for the 2006 drought response.

The 2018 winner of the **Lois Harris Scholarship** was **Alec McCallum**.

Ag Bureau **continued our contribution to PIRSA's Modern Extension** framework.

The Bureau **managed project funding of \$141,000** to increase the adoption of evidence based sustainable production methods.

Sponsorship of \$23,000 was received towards Bureau member projects.

Our **Regional Support Network** was launched this year, creating the opportunity for six Bureau members to be a voice for their local agricultural communities to the Board, government and other agencies.

"Agriculture is the most
healthful, most useful and
most noble employment
of man."

George Washington



ABOUT US

The Agricultural Bureau of South Australia (the Bureau) is a not-for-profit organisation run by farmers for farmers.

With a proud history in South Australia, the Bureau has assisted primary producers since 1888 and is the only farmer network group of its kind remaining in Australia.

Membership is open to anyone who is associated with, or has an interest in farming, agricultural development and education.

The Bureau supports agricultural development through the provision of information and expertise to producers and the wider community via an extensive network and works in close co-operation with the Government of South Australia and agricultural research institutions. This currently includes Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA), the Department for Environment and Water (DEW), the University of Adelaide and the SA Research and Development Institute (SARDI).

There are more than 1500 members of the Bureau across 70 branches throughout South Australia. Membership of an Ag Bureau branch provides opportunities for professional development, growth and a chance to network with local farmers.

In particular the Bureau provides opportunities for young farmers to be mentored and encouraged as they learn from the experience of other members.



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CHAIR'S REPORT

On behalf of the Board I am pleased to present this report of our Bureau's achievements for 2017/18 and in this, our 130th anniversary year!

Since 1888 the Ag Bureau of South Australia has provided farmers and landowners with a meeting place to discuss issues of interest to their local region. Branch activities have evolved to include hosting technical and extension trials, organising grower bus trips and supporting communities affected by natural disasters. Members of our 70 branches attend branch events and activities and contribute to the sustainability of the industry by taking part in the latest projects and trials.

One person who could tell you a thing or two about the Ag Bureau's achievements over the years is Ross Roberts, of Nelshaby branch. Ross has clocked up an extraordinary 70 years of membership! Ross kindly shares a few of his memories with us on page 6.

Historically Ag Bureau shared a strong connection with Government and was supported financially to be a key conduit of information flow from government to farmers. I am pleased to say that this tradition is re-emerging with the Ag Bureau's invitation to contribute to the Modern Extension framework.

This year saw three Modern Extension meetings held with Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA), with Brett Smith from Rural Business Support, our Treasurer Janette Ridgway and myself representing the Ag Bureau. Janette Ridgway will represent the Bureau on this project steering committee moving forward.

I also have been involved with Natural Resource Management Reform project headed up by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW).

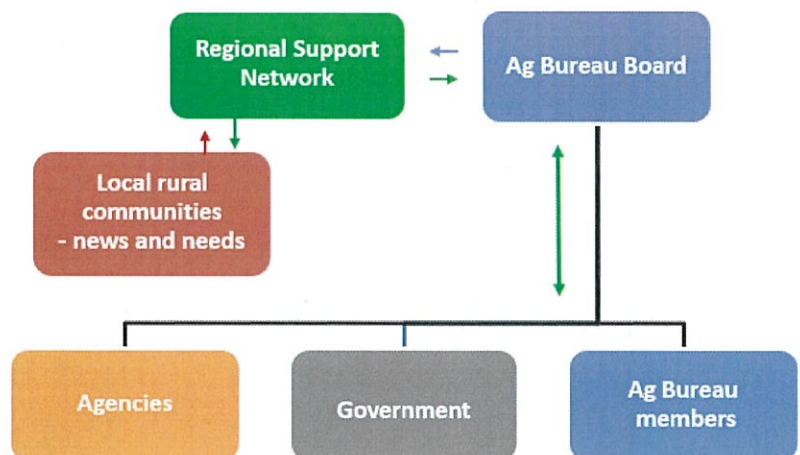
The Royal Adelaide Show acknowledged the longstanding connection with Ag Bureau in our 130th year with a special grain and fodder section. The Show has provided sections for Bureau entries over many years. This year I sponsored the Ag Bureau Chair's trophy for the best exhibit in Bureau classes.

Our newly launched Regional Support Network (RSN) has been another exciting development this year.

Six Bureau members will have the opportunity to contribute to key decision making and ensure that important local issues are communicated to the Board, government and other agencies.



Contribute. Share. Influence.
Ag Bureau of SA Regional Support Network





It has been so rewarding and inspiring to learn how our 2017 winners have progressed their agricultural careers this year - read more on pages 10 and 12. I also had the pleasure of awarding the 2017 Services to Primary Production Award to Mount Barker's Greg Cock (pictured left).

For the 2018 Awards we're pleased to again have the support of both the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) and PIRSA, which allows us to provide these prestigious scholarships.

We also thank SA Water for their generous sponsorship of the Bureau's Regional Bus Tours during 2017-2018.

The strength of the Ag Bureau lies in the unique character of our volunteer based organisation. Our members are passionate about agriculture, community and learning together for the best outcomes for their businesses, family and the rural sector.

We look forward to continuing our work in the agricultural industry in 2018-19, representing our members in providing an independent voice to government departments, agencies and partners.

Mark Grossman
Chair - Agricultural Bureau of South Australia

The new board for 2017/18 was announced at our AGM and I am pleased to welcome Allan Zerna, representing the Eyre Peninsula.

Geoff Page continues to represent the Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island until his retirement from the Board in October 2018. Janette Ridgway represents the South East, David Edwards the Yorke Peninsula/Mid North and I remain as the Chair and representative for the Barossa/Light region.

The Bureau is committed to encouraging and supporting rural youth who are working not only in primary production but in careers that sustain rural communities, so our annual Spirit of Excellence Awards were offered again in October 2017.



LONGSTANDING MEMBER AWARDS

The Board recognises and congratulates the following longstanding members on reaching their milestones. Thank you for your continuing contributions to our work.

70 years

Nelshaby

Ross Roberts

60 years

Rowlands Flat

**Alan Modistach
Eddie Schild
Kevin Schiller
Reg Robinson**

Moonta

Donald Bagshaw

50 years

Boors Plains

Mervyn Baker

Koonunga

**Charlie Braunack
Jeffrey Hoffmann
Marcus Kleinig**

Lone Pine Tanunda

Malcolm Graue

Nelshaby

**Daryle Johns
Henry Mudge**

Parawa

**Bill Pearce
Ian Williams**

40 years

Angaston

Richard Evans

Boors Plains

Lindsay Gordon Barker

Lone Pine Tanunda

Jeffrey Rosenzweig

Owen

John Tiller

Parawa

**Graeme Golding
Glen Rowlands
Vic Walter**

30 years

Lone Pine Tanunda

Dean Afford

Nelshaby

**Gordon Baker
Peter Bishop
Graeme Crouch
Ray Haldane
Philip Johns**

Owen

**Trevor Clifford
Peter Freebairn
Andrew Parker
Rob Saint
Lachlan Wood**

Parawa

**Peter Filsell
Charlotte Morley
Dean Whitford**

20 years

Koonunga

**Matthew Hampel
Andrew Kleinig
Allen McKenzie
Nick Riebke**

Nelshaby

**Steven A. Johns
Brendan Johns
Merv Lewis
Barry Mudge**

Parawa

Stephen Rogers

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

The pursuit and securing of additional sponsorship support for the Ag Bureau's activities and events has once again been successful this year.

Pleasingly, negotiations with both SA Water and the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) resulted in funding again being allocated towards our Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards and for educational bus tours by branches.

The \$8000 DEW Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship is in memory of both Peter and Wendy Olsen to recognise the couple's collective contributions to agriculture and landcare.

We remember Peter and Wendy's passion for environmental management and advocacy for sustainable farming practices.

SA Water continued its Bronze level Ag Bureau sponsorship to facilitate more educational bus tours for branch members. Branches were able to apply for a share of these funds to run trips in local areas.

We also acknowledge the ongoing sponsorship of Primary Industries SA (PIRSA), which enables us to offer the Rural Youth Bursary.

We thank Rural Business Support as well for their contribution to our Spirit of Excellence Dinner.

GOVERNING BODY

The Board of the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia comprises representatives from each of the Bureau regions, augmented with members from government, agricultural education and research bodies.

The Board represents the interests of South Australia's farmers to government and contributes to the extension of agricultural research and development through the management of projects.

On behalf of Bureau members, the Board manages the Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards which comprise four awards which recognise achievements in the agricultural field.

The Awards provide opportunities to young people to pursue a career of excellence in agriculture and are an avenue to promote Bureau membership to a younger audience. As the governing body the Board is responsible for the following:

- Managing and administering finances, insurance, awards and projects;
- Preparing and distribution of submissions on industry relevant issues;
- Facilitating the implementation of research, extension and training programs that enhance agriculture, business, management and
- Promoting the aims, objectives and achievements of The Ag Bureau and the importance of agriculture and sustainable resource management to the broader community; and
- Providing a view forward to industry bodies and Government departments on behalf of members.

Advertise with Ag Bureau's e-news

ADVERTORIAL
(200 WORDS +
SMALL IMAGE)
\$250

AD SPACE:
10.5CM X 10.5CM
\$175
5.5CM X 10CM
\$110



"YOU NEVER REALLY RETIRE FROM FARMING"...

Ross Roberts claims you never really retire from farming and, at 92 (or thereabouts - he's lost count) he continues to be an active Nelshaby Ag Bureau member who takes a keen interest in local farming operations.

In this, the Ag Bureau's 130th anniversary year, Ross has reached a magnificent 70 years as a member of Nelshaby branch - an extraordinary achievement!

Ross was a broad acre cereal cropper, farming barley wheat, lupins and field peas. He continued this well into his late 80s until retiring "four or five years ago".

Ross says that while he's been "getting a bit slow" lately, he is still a regular face at the branch meetings. And armed with a new set of hearing aids recently, he doesn't miss much.

Ross' connection with Ag Bureau began from the day he was born. His father was a founding member of the Nelshaby Ag Bureau in September 1922.

Ross still remembers attending his first Bureau meeting as a young chap, just out of high school - he came home as branch secretary! In the seven decades since then he has served several stints as both president and secretary.



In the early days Ross was so devoted to his Bureau duties that his wife was forced to take drastic measures.

"She would lock my good pants in the wardrobe to keep me home and stop me going out to the meetings," Ross said, tongue in cheek.

"I didn't miss many Bureau meetings - they were the highlight of my month."

Ross recalls that Nelshaby Bureau meetings used to be held on Saturday mornings. The wives would make the most of the opportunity to go into town

shopping while the blokes met to catch up on Branch activities.

Nelshaby, a market garden area supplying the city of Port Pirie district, was formed after Port Pirie branch closed in 1921 (1886 to 1921).

When Ross' father returned home from serving in World War I, he took up a Soldier's Settler Block and began farming. He built a house on the block, carting the stone for it from the nearby hills.

This historic house is the place Ross still calls home today.



70 YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP FOR ROSS

Ross continued to farm the family land with his brother until his brother enlisted for the second World War. Returning home, his brother received a Soldier's Settler Block on Kangaroo Island - where he is still farming today.

Ross and his wife Lorna had five children. Of them, their eldest son Gary continued on the farm and is recognised as an Ag Bureau life member.

Before he retired from farming, Ross remembers there was a trial plot on his family's land about five years ago.

"I found it very interesting with all the different treatments for cereal crops - farming has changed so much during my 70 years in the rural industry," he said.

Ross has many other fond and still vivid Ag Bureau memories, including an annual trip away to visit other Bureaus around the state.

"This was a highlight and very beneficial for my farming practises," he said.

"These days farmers don't share information between themselves so much - instead they get in experts and consultants."

Ross reminisced that when he was first a member, the Ag Bureau had an informational paper that was regularly distributed. The informational papers covered many subjects over the years and focused on all aspects of life, not just on farming. One of the first papers Ross organised as secretary of Nelshaby was by the Minister of Religion, whom Ross arranged to come and speak at the Branch meeting.

When asked about the Spirit of Excellence Awards and how they encourage young farmers to grow their careers in agriculture, Ross responded with enthusiasm.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to support young farmers," he said.

In our 130th year, Ross says the most important benefits of being an Ag Bureau member are the same as what they were in 1888. He has nothing but good things to say about the direction the Bureau is heading in.

"(Belonging to) Ag Bureau is a lovely way to mix with the people of the district - that knowledge sharing between members and the social aspect, meeting with other farmers and having the support of local members... it's important."

"I'm very proud of the young people that have taken over the responsibility of the Nelshaby Bureau. They are respectful and responsible and I believe they will do good things with the continuation of the Nelshaby branch."

We're confident they will, Ross. They have big shoes to fill, but if they follow in your well trodden footsteps, the future for Ag Bureau is a bright one!

"She would lock my good pants in the wardrobe to keep me home and stop me going out to the meetings. I didn't miss many - they were the highlight of my month."



SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2017

Our Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards offer farmers and rural youth the opportunity to pursue personal and professional development to ultimately benefit their local communities.

A Barossa Valley goat meat visionary and an aspiring Ag Sciences teacher from Mount Pleasant were recognised as future leaders of South Australian agriculture at our 2017 Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards.

Generously supported by the then Department of Environment Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) and Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA), the Awards offer young farmers and rural youth the opportunity to pursue personal and professional development to benefit their local communities.

Tracy Bonython from the Barossa Valley was the recipient of the new 'DEWNR Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship for Young Farmers'.

The \$8000 scholarship is for a young farmer (aged 18-35 for the 2017 Awards) to pursue further study, take a study tour or run a special project. The new scholarship is in memory of the late Peter and

Wendy Olsen to recognise both of their contributions to agriculture and landcare in South Australia. Sponsored by DEWNR for the first time in 2017, the scholarship focuses on sustainability of the natural resources that underpin primary production.

Kayla Starkey from Mount Pleasant was awarded the 2017 Rural Youth Bursary sponsored by Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA).

Kayla is studying a Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences at the University of Adelaide and aims to go on to complete a Masters in Teaching. She also co-manages two sheep studs with her father.

The Rural Youth Bursary consists of a \$5000 grant from PIRSA for rural young people (aged 18-30) working in a rural community, not necessarily in agriculture, to pursue further study, undertake a study tour or develop a special project in their chosen career.



LEFT: 2017 Award winners. Tracy Bonython - 'DEWNR Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship for Young Farmers'; Greg Cock - 'Services to Primary Production' recipient and Kayla Starkey - 'PIRSA Rural Youth Bursary winner.'

SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2017

Passionate about educating young people to pursue success in agriculture, Kayla planned to use the grant to attend the 2018 National Association of Agricultural Educators conference in Launceston in January 2018.

The October 2017 ceremony also saw Greg Cock of Mount Barker recognised with the Services to Primary Production Award.

Greg's contribution to agriculture over more than 30 years includes leadership roles with PIRSA and the Ag Bureau. He has fostered strong relationships with Ag Bureau members through roles such as leading PIRSA's Regional Advisory Group for the 2006 drought response.

Greg has an ongoing interest in rural financial services, natural resource management and sustainable agriculture. He is a firm believer in empowering others to identify their own priorities and support them in achieving them.

"Even if you think it's the smallest idea that may help in your community, or help your career in the rural sector, have a go. It's such a great prize."

Kayla Starkey
2017 PIRSA Rural Youth Bursary winner



Services to Primary Production winner for 2017, Mount Barker's Greg Cock, with Alison Lloyd-Wright (PIRSA), Mark Grossman and Daniel Casement (PIRSA).

WHERE COULD AN AG BUREAU BURSARY TAKE YOUR CAREER?

Each year the Ag Bureau of SA's Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards provide two young people with the opportunity to open doors, chase an idea or follow their dreams.

The \$8000 DEW Sustainable Agricultural Scholarship honours the memory of Peter and Wendy Olsen, former members of the Ag Bureau who died in the Whyalla Airlines crash of May 2000. It is open to primary producers aged between 18 and 40.

Anyone aged 18-30 and living in a rural area can apply for the Rural Youth Bursary. The winner receives \$5000 to spend on a project or study tour to further their career opportunities.

Next year's awards will be launched in July 2019. This means there's plenty of time to start working on your application...



ONE YEAR ON WITH 2017 AWARD WINNERS



Winning the Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship for Young Farmers at last year's Spirit of Excellence Awards has been "a huge game changer" for Tracy Bonython and her family business, Bon Chevron, a Barossa Valley gourmet goat meat business.

Tracy and husband Owen started the business as a hobby in 2014 after purchasing 10 Boer does to breed their own wethers. Tracy was an agriculture teacher with Faith College in Tanunda and had been trying to find wethers for students to compete with at the Royal Adelaide Show. The goats were brought home after the Show – and Bon Chevron was born.

As the Bonythons added to their herd, local restaurants discovered the rare, locally produced gourmet meat. It didn't take long for the unique paddock-to-plate operation to become an award-winning local food brand.

Receiving the 2017 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship gave Tracy the confidence in the family's unique business to "really consider what role we can play" as part of the Australian agriculture and goat industries.

"I've met some amazing people and have been given opportunities to not only grow our business but also to become associated with groups like the Goat Industry Council of Australia and Meat & Livestock Australia," Tracy said.

When asked about the next step for Bon Chevron, Tracy says "a lot more growing and a lot more learning!"

"Our business has recently purchased numerous stud animals with amazing structure and size so that we can continue to improve the quality and genetics of our animals," she said.

"We want to continue growing the number of local restaurants we supply to and always keep the quality of our product at the forefront."

2017 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship winner Tracy Bonython

Winning the 2018 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship allowed Tracy to:

- Conduct pasture trials to work towards better practices for grazing goats and more sustainable options.
- Purchase equipment and training to complete on-farm Faecal Egg Count tests so that drench resistance can be controlled on farm.
- Participate in a study tour of Victoria to establish connections with similar businesses that are promoting farmed goat meat in Australia and with breeders of stud Boer goats so that genetic improvement can be achieved in the Bon Chevon herd.
- Observe other unique farming operations in the form of Community Supported Agriculture.
- Create a new housing facility for the Bon Chevon bucks utilising sustainable pasture options like Tagasaste trees.



ABOVE: Grazing Bon Chevon goats on Tracy and Owen's Barossa Valley property earlier this year.

"I've met some amazing people and have been given opportunities to not only grow our business but also to become associated with groups like the Goat Industry Council of Australia and Meat & Livestock Australia."

Tracy Bonython



2017 Rural Youth Bursary winner – Kayla Starkey

Winning the 2017 Rural Youth Bursary has helped Mount Pleasant's Kayla Starkey to progress her dreams of becoming a secondary Agricultural/Science teacher.

Growing up on a sheep property at Mount Pleasant, Kayla is highly passionate about teaching youth within the agricultural sector and is currently in her final year of a Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences at the University of Adelaide.

Kayla's winning 2017 application included detailed plans to travel to Launceston Tasmania in January 2018 to attend the four day National Ag Teachers conference. This provided a valuable opportunity to broaden her knowledge of the agricultural education sector, as well as meeting and networking with likeminded professionals already in teaching.

With the help of Ag Bureau of SA members, Kayla organised some on-farm visits while in the Apple Isle, allowing her to explore the practises being utilised by sheep growers there, while further broadening her industry contacts.

Kayla is still heavily involved in her family's stud farm, breeding quality Polwarth and Merino sheep as part of their two studs; Bel-Antha Polwarth and Hill View Merino. Along with the breeding, Kayla also hopes to get her family stud back showing Polwarth sheep again – a highlight from their rural past – in the near future.

After completing her Bachelor of Ag Science, Kayla plans to enrol and complete a Masters of Teaching over the next two years to fulfil her dream of qualifying as a secondary educator.

Kayla says the Rural Youth Bursary highlights the community spirit of the Ag Bureau, supporting young people in rural areas to pursue and solidify their career dreams, ultimately to help build their local communities.

"No matter what your idea is, run with it – do the costing, make a budget, put it all together and be prepared," Kayla said.

If you are serious, then definitely have a good plan of how you're going to use the money because if you are shortlisted you will have to present it to the judging panel.

"Even if you think it's the smallest idea that may help in your community, or help your career in the rural sector, have a go. It's such a great prize, it really is worth giving it a shot.

"I have personally made so many contacts and connections through winning the award that have already benefited me and that I will continue to use throughout my ag teaching career."



ABOVE: During her Tasmania farm visits, Kayla had the privilege to inspect some of Georgina Wallace's rams and ewes. "This was just some of her spectacular wool that she is producing," Kayla said.



"Agriculture is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals and happiness."

Thomas Jefferson



AG BUREAU PROJECTS 2017-18

The Bureau has a long and proud history of managing projects that benefit members from State to local level. Funding is from a variety of sources including the Australian Government and the Government of South Australia.

Projects continuing

Benchmarking Soil Health Under Alternative Systems, Monitoring Biochar Trial and FFF Group Support Stage 2b

Adelaide Mt Lofty Ranges
NRMB - Sustainable Agriculture Industry Support Grant

\$130,115.70 (June 2017 to June 2018)

The pressure is on for farmers to increase production and maintain profitability, while providing a healthy product for consumers. Production issues for the Adelaide and Mt Lofty NRM region continue to emerge including increasing acid soils, reduced growing season length under a changing climate, a lack of adequate Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Sulphur and trace element deficiencies such as copper.

Soil health treatments such as alternative fertilisers can help overcome these issues by reducing acidity, increasing the soil organic carbon and soil moisture holding capacity, increasing the growing season length and supplying organic nutrients and trace elements. Chemical treatments cannot do this but they can increase production by providing nutrients and trace elements in a more readily available form.



Producers in the Adelaide Mt Lofty NRM region would like a better understanding of the best and most cost effective soil health treatments and their relationship to soil acidity, soil moisture, growing season, nutrient and trace element content.

Furthermore, they would like an understanding of their longer term benefit on their soil health and potential to help manage climate change impacts such as a shortened growing season.

AG BUREAU PROJECTS 2017-18

Projects commenced

Improved Control of Exotic Pest Snails in the Yorke Peninsula Region of SA

Australian Government National Landcare Program (NLP) – Smart Farms Small Grants

\$52,250 (July 2018 to June 2020)

The project will evaluate new techniques to improve snail control and meet new market demands for low numbers of snails in grain.

The use of time lapse cameras, together with collection and analysis of snail species throughout the season has improved snail control, through increasing understanding of snail behaviour and snail bait efficacy. Increasing snail mortality to 85% has reduced crop damage and harvesting issues.

However snails are still a major problem in many areas in SA due to high snail reproduction rates in favourable conditions (one snail producing 200 to 400 offspring) Achieving 85% control of snails will not ensure farmers can meet forecast standards of “less than one snail per 0.5 litres” There is concern farmers may revert to increased use of bare earth treatments to meet tighter grain snail tolerances. Bare earth treatments will reduce plant soil cover and significantly increase erosion risk in loam soils.

Fleurieu Forward Farmers - Increasing profit by managing climate variability through soil health

Australian Government NLP – Smart Farms Small Grants

\$109,793.20 (July 2018 to June 2020)

Livestock producers in the Fleurieu region will be supported to better manage soil and pasture health, climate variability and improve profit.

The project will:

- Innovatively measure pasture quality, soil moisture and rainfall at six soil health sites and 15 farm sites, while continuing to measure soil health at two of the replicated soil health sites.
- Utilise and build upon decision support tools for our region incorporating data collected on feed quality, nutrition, productivity, soil moisture and soil health to support decisions for N & P scheduling, optimal hay and silage cutting, grazing management, and supplementary feeding.
- Produce a fact sheet that helps producers to understand how to build soil health.
- Conduct a field day demonstrating the tools and key project outcomes.
- Develop a one-day workshop to train producers on building soil health, using the tools developed.
- Deliver outcomes via newsletters and our web site.



AG BUREAU PROJECTS 2017-18

Innovative and cost-effective methods to manage 'emerging' soil acidity to improve soil health, crop and pasture production

Australian Government NLP – Smart Farms Small Grants

\$100,188 (July 2018 to June 2020)

With more intensive and productive farming systems in the Mid North and Yorke Peninsula of SA there are now areas with emerging issues of soil acidity that have been regarded as traditionally non-acid soil areas. The growth of high value crops such as lentils and beans that are highly sensitive to low pH soils are not growing well in some areas due to increasing areas of soil acidity.

The project will work with six farmer groups. It will trial and implement new and innovative technologies of soil pH mapping to show the spatial variation of soil pH across paddocks. The soil pH mapping demonstration work will be ground-truthed and used with decision support tools with farmer workshops to increase awareness, understanding, management and treatment of acid soils.

The increased knowledge and facilitation of the new technology will allow farmers to better manage soil acidity to improve soil health, production and profitability. Case studies will be prepared.

Innovative NDVI, pH and EC mapping in the Clare Valley vineyards and investigation and management of soil constraints to improve soil health, production and profitability

Australian Government NLP – Smart Farms Small Grants

\$108,607.40 (July 2018 to June 2020)

The Clare Valley of South Australia is renowned for its Riesling wines as well as its premium red varieties including Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon. In 2017 the total value of wine grapes was approximately \$32 million.

Within the vineyards there can be considerable soil variability that can have a serious impact on grape

quality as well as yield. This can be due to variation in soil type and soil qualities such as low soil pH, salt, sodic soils etc.

This project is to develop and extend new and innovative tools, methods and technologies such as NDVI (normalised difference vegetation index) with UAV (drones), pH and EC (Electrical conductivity) mapping to identify variability within vineyards. From this, management zones can then be identified. Within each management zone soil pits will be dug to look at soil constraints.

Workshops will be held with grape growers to improve their knowledge of soil and to better manage soils to improve production and profitability.



Workshops for Clare Valley grape growers will improve their knowledge of soil and to better manage soils to improve production and profitability.

AG BUREAU PROJECTS 2017-18

Feasibility study to explore the technical and financial feasibility of establishing a facility for aggregating and adding value to locally produced grain

Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation and Science – National Radioactive Waste Management Facility Community Benefit Programme

\$76,230 (July 2018 to June 2019)

The following activities will be undertaken:

- Market consultation to study requirements and determine viability of - establishing the infrastructure, including calculating capital expenditure required
- Identifying location for planned facility, if the study is positive producing information memorandum
- Seeking expressions of interest, which will be evaluated
- Negotiating an agreement with preferred parties if expressions of interest are acceptable

The outcome of the activities is to determine the viability of developing infrastructure to store and process grain.

The project will be located within the Local Government Area of the District Council of Kimba.



Ag Bureau has received funding for a feasibility study to explore the technical and financial feasibility of establishing a facility for aggregating and adding value to locally produced grain.



AG BUREAU PROJECTS 2017-18

Export Hay Trials in the Kimba district

Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation and Science – National Radioactive Waste Management Facility Community Benefit Programme.

\$19,250 (July 2018 to June 2019)

Minnipa Research Centre is to undertake export hay trials in the Kimba district, on oaten hay in relation to yield and feed test standards to allow producers to make better informed decisions when planting and managing hay crops.

Activities include: planting, managing and harvesting trial plots, undertaking an oat rotation study, and compilation and reporting of trial and study data.

Establishing a moisture probe and weather station network across the Kimba region

Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation and Science – National Radioactive Waste Management Facility Community Benefit Programme

\$21,693 (July 2018 to December 2018)

Establishing a moisture probe and weather station network across the region, to improve data availability and quality, and agronomic decision-making and grain yield.

Activities will include: site selection and installation of probe network (six probes in representative soil types), data collection/internet upload, and running education workshops on data interpretation and better agronomic decisions.



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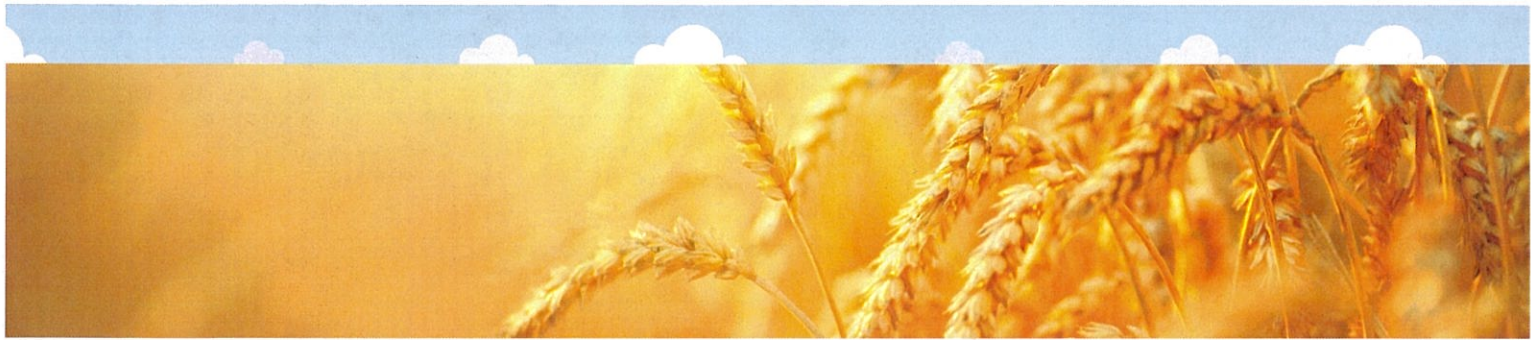
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ABOUT OUR BOARD MEMBERS

Mark Grossman, Chair

Mark represents the Barossa and Light region and has been a Bureau member of the Angaston branch since 1982 where he held all office positions. He operates a family primary production partnership with enterprises including sheep (self-replacing merinos, 1st cross ewes, prime lambs and operating Koonawarra white suffolk and border leicester studs), cattle, cropping and viticulture. The farming properties are situated in the Angaston and Sedan regions. Other community involvement includes board member of Australian White Suffolk Association, elected member of the Barossa Council and Vice President of Angaston AH&F Show Society.

Geoff Page, Deputy Chair

Geoff represents the Hills & Fleurieu region on the Agricultural Bureau of SA Board which is where he resides and has his own farming business that produces cut flowers, certified organic vegetable and herb seedlings which are sold at farmers markets. The farm also produces prime lambs and hay for sale. Geoff works part-time at the University of South Australia as the student Ombudsman. Geoff has academic qualifications in education, agriculture, agricultural economics and land valuation.

Janette Ridgway, Treasurer

Janette returned to the Board this year as Treasurer and representative for the Upper South East Agricultural Bureau branches. As a farmer, Janette works on a mixed farming enterprise with her husband and son. Their farm is east of Bordertown, in the district known as Pine Hill. They grow broad acre crops, have a sheep enterprise as well as a horticulture business growing gladiolus bulbs. Janette has a passion for agriculture, community and family and brings these skills and understanding to the Board along with a desire for learning and sharing of information.

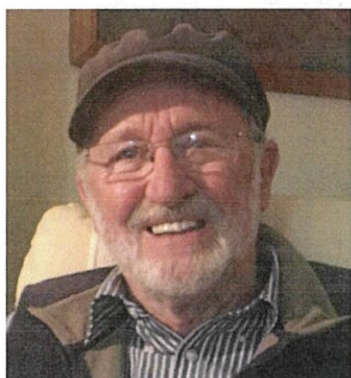
Members of our 70 branches attend branch events and activities and contribute to the sustainability of the industry by taking part in the latest projects and trials.



David Edwards

David is a fifth generation farmer at Minlaton on the southern Yorke Peninsula with his ancestors taking up the land in 1880. David's cropping rotations have changed over the last fifteen years from barley pasture rotations working the land five to seven times, to no till farming, sowing three hundred hectares each of wheat, barley and canola. David is seen the significant changes in farming over the past ten years and is very positive and optimistic about the future of farming.

Welcome Allan Zerna



Our newest Board member, Allan first became involved in the Ag Bureau movement when the Franklin Harbour branch reformed in 1983. he has since served as both president and secretary and, more importantly

in recent years, as the "Beer and Barby" Manager!

Although his parents and grandparents were pioneer farmers in the Cowell district, Allan spent his early working life at BHP Whyalla. He abandoned the life of a cadet engineer for the call of a free, easy and bohemian surfing lifestyle for a time, before accepting a job offer on an uncle's farm at Mitchellville.

After 14 years of working for his uncle, having accumulated a wife (Jan), three and a small amount of money, the family bought 1600ha just north of Cowell where Allan and

Jan continue to live in semi retirement. They ran 500 merino ewes, grew hard wheat, feed barley, oats and triticale and dabbled unsuccessfully in canola, peas and vetch.

Dry seasons, with the resultant wind erosion convinced me to become involved in the No Till movement spurred on by a West Aust bus trip organised by the late Peter Olsen.

Allan looks forward to serving on the Ag Bureau Board and hopes that by doing so, he can assist fellow farmers to become more productive and sustainable, while enjoying what they are doing.