

Pastoral Board Communiqué – April 2020

In this edition

This edition of the communiqué provides an update on Board activities and includes information on drought support and recovery, lease rent payments, updates relating to the COVID-19 crisis, and more.

Board meetings and activities

- Drought support - The Board has been busy consulting with PIRSA on improving drought support options for pastoralists, and welcomed the State Government's announcement that a 50% rebate will apply to all 2018-19 pastoral lease rents. Further information is below. The Board was also pleased to receive an invitation to join the State Government's Dry Conditions Working Group which will provide advice to the Government on drought support. David Larkin, Presiding Member, will represent the Board, thereby increasing representation from the pastoral livestock sector on the group.
- Pastoral Act review - The Board has received an update on the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act 1989 review and will be seeking to take a lead role in the development of the new Act. More information will be provided on the progress of this important reform in due course.
- Water Allocation Plan - The Board received a detailed presentation from the Department for Environment and Water on the Draft Water Allocation Plan for the Far North Wells Prescribed Wells Area 2019-2029. The Board will provide a submission on the draft Plan to the SA Arid Lands Natural Resource Management (NRM) Board. Pastoralists are encouraged to take an interest in this vital plan for the pastoral region (note, public consultation on the draft plan closes on 17 April). More information is available [here](#).
- Pastoral land assessment - The Board received a presentation on a new land condition assessment tool which uses satellite imagery. This is being jointly developed by PIRSA, the University of Adelaide and the Australian Institute of Machine Learning. The tool has the potential to modernise and increase the effectiveness of land condition assessments required under the Pastoral Act, and assist pastoralists with monitoring land condition and productivity. More information will be provided in the near future on this work.
- Lease compliance - Recently the Board made important determinations in regards to ongoing lease compliance cases under the Pastoral Act.
- Lease assessments and lease term extensions - The Board has approved lease assessments and extensions of lease terms for several pastoral

leases, with more in the pipeline. The lessees of these pastoral leases will be receiving notifications in the coming weeks.

COVID-19 and public entering pastoral land

The State Government is actively discouraging all unnecessary travel across South Australia in an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19 and is asking people to cancel or reschedule any trips or holidays to regional communities.

If pastoralists are concerned about members of the public entering their pastoral lease, PIRSA is advising the following:

- Lessees may refuse consent for any members of the public to travel and / or camp on the pastoral lease as per section 48(5) of the Pastoral Act;
- Lessees should contact the SA Police if they find members of the public camping or gathering on public access routes or their pastoral lease;
- If it is safe for them to do so, lessees can request people to leave pastoral lease land;
- If there is no risk to their personal safety (e.g. if confronted with aggression), lessees should obtain vehicle registration details and photographs and provide these to the police.

This advice will be updated as conditions change, for the latest information visit the [PIRSA COVID-19 information hub](#).

Drought support

As of March 2020, the Government has applied a 50% rebate to all 2018-19 pastoral lease rents as an additional drought support measure for pastoralists. The Board played a key role in this decision.

With the support of the Outback Communities Authority (through funding from the Commonwealth's Drought Communities program) two new Family and Business Support Mentors have been employed for the pastoral region – Ross Sawers and Anne Collins, in addition to the continued support from John White.

For further information on the rebate and other drought support options, visit the [PIRSA drought hub](#) or contact the PIRSA Drought Hotline on 1800 931 314 or email: PIRSA.drought@sa.gov.au

Lease rent payment and rebate

Due to the recently announced 50% rebate on pastoral lease rents, lessees are advised that they are not required to pay the full amount as currently invoiced for 2018-19 rents, and should hold payment until further advice is provided by PIRSA. If lessees have already paid in full, PIRSA will be in

contact to provide the rebate as a refund. Anyone with queries regarding these payments should contact the drought support team (contact details listed above).

Contacting the Pastoral Unit during COVID-19

As with many workplaces during the COVID-19 crisis, PIRSA's Pastoral Unit staff are now largely working from home. While there are some challenges in electronic communication over the busy networks, it is business as usual.

However, it is requested that communication as far as possible be done electronically rather than in hard copy form by post, particularly for lease tenure applications and forms (such as lease transfer, consent to mortgage, sub-leasing). Further information on tenure forms and communication is available on the [PIRSA website](#).

The best way to contact the Pastoral Unit for any pastoral related matter and Board business is by email: PIRSA.Pastoral@sa.gov.au or call (08) 8429 0333.

COVID-19 and your business

As access to support is often difficult in the pastoral lands of South Australia, the Board is concerned about the unprecedented challenges the COVID-19 crisis will have on already drought-stressed pastoral business and families.

Regional Development Australia (Far North) have packaged a comprehensive directory of available support services in relation to the COVID-19 virus, available [here](#), and for specific advice on "*What can small businesses do now*", click [here](#).

For other useful information on COVID-19 and agricultural industries, also visit the [PIRSA website](#).

Help to unlock the potential for South Australia

Calling all people involved in primary industries, research, or agricultural technologies (AgTech).

The State Government, through the guidance and advice of the AgTech Advisory Group, is creating an AgTech strategy for South Australia to

encourage greater uptake of technology on-farm to increase productivity and profitability.

The Agricultural Technologies in SA survey is the first step in putting together a blueprint to make South Australia a leader in AgTech. [Take part in the survey.](#)

Growing South Australia's red meat and wool industry

There's a lot happening with the State's Red Meat and Wool Growth Program which will be of interest to pastoralists. Keep an eye out for Producer Technology Groups starting in your area this year, as well the Livestock Enterprise Planning Program to assist producers develop the knowledge and skills required to take their business to the next level and devise their own business and technology action plan.

For further information visit the [PIRSA website](#) or email: redmeatandwool@sa.gov.au

Across the Outback – new edition

A new edition of the Across the Outback newsletter, produced by the Natural Resources SA Arid Lands on behalf of the NRM Board, is packed full of information about the pastoral region, and is available [here](#).

Who is your Pastoral Board?

Did you know that four of the six members of the Pastoral Board are pastoral lessees who are also hands-on managers and live on their stations, and are spread from the Olary district up to Oodnadatta? Deputy members are also pastoralists, and other members are all closely connected with the state and national pastoral industries.

More information, including the February 2020 Communique which included profiles of each member, is available on the [PIRSA website](#).

Your feedback

As always, the Board is keen to hear your thoughts on any matters of concern in regards to your lease or the pastoral industry. Feedback can also be used to assist the Board in its strategic planning, and in developing policies and advice for the Minister.

Please make contact with the Board through PIRSA's Pastoral Unit by email: PIRSA.Pastoral@sa.gov.au or call (08) 8429 0333.