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GPSA policy focus to lift grain producers' profitability

GRAIN Producers SA is calling on political parties and candidates contesting the 2014 State Election to support the organisation's key policy priorities that will guarantee the future profitability and sustainability of South Australian grain producers.

GPSA has today released its five-point policy platform. Priority areas for an incoming or incumbent government to address include:

1. Increase competitiveness and profitability

Contribute to fostering a competitive, economically robust and environmentally sustainable grain industry.

2. Profitably grow grain production

Focus on the grain industry's sustainable development across the whole supply chain to ensure its full potential is reached and its contribution to the state's future prosperity is maximised.

3. Invest in research, development and extension

Enable the industry to drive innovation through increased government investment in agricultural research, development and extension and initiatives that encourage private sector investment, in collaboration with industry research partners.

4. Build a stronger workforce

Help to improve the understanding of agriculture's opportunities to ensure the industry's current and future labour demands are filled.

5. Balance agriculture with the environment and community

Promote a balanced and consistent approach to natural resource management, land access and infrastructure use, ensuring primary production has priority and can profitably increase production.

GPSA chairman Garry Hansen says support for these policies will be assessed during the campaign and producers advised where the major parties rank in terms of their endorsement.

"GPSA wants all political parties to ensure the value of agriculture in our economy, community and environment is recognised through sound and strategic policies," he said.

"The industry's export value is \$2.8 billion, making grain growers major contributors to SA's economy. They need policies over the coming four years that will further boost their profitability and sustainability, not hinder them as small, regional businesses."

As part of its policy platform, GPSA is calling for two new bodies to be set-up to tackle issues crucial to the industry's productivity – transport logistics and recognition of primary production.

Chief executive Darren Arney says a project group with government, transport, freight and primary industries representatives is needed to enable a consistent approach to road infrastructure planning and heavy vehicle road access.

He says the industry does not have a coherent road network across all councils for heavy vehicles travelling between storage sites, railheads and ports, which is frustrating heavy vehicle operators and adding to freight costs for grain producers.

Mr Arney says a Standing Committee on Primary Industries must be established by the next South Australian Parliament.

“In many instances the broader community has lost touch with the value agriculture brings to the state and the jobs it creates,” he said. “We need to ensure primary production, including the grain industry, continues to be part of the state’s growth and economic success. Production systems must be economically sustainable and value chains internationally competitive.

“GPSA’s primary objective during the campaign is to highlight the issues which are affecting producers’ sustainability and profitability. Our key policy platform centres on ensuring a more productive and profitable grain industry – which is good for the entire state.”

- Visit www.grainproducerssa.com.au for a copy of GPSA’s *Policy Platform for the March 2014 State Election*. For more information, call 08 8391 6621 or email info@grainproducerssa.com.au

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About Grain Producers SA:

Grain Producers SA is a not-for-profit organisation that represents all levy-paying grain producers in South Australia. GPSA’s objective is to foster the development and implementation of policies that promote the economic and environmental sustainability of the South Australian grains industry for the benefit of its producers and the wider community. Growers are encouraged to have their say on policy and have input on the people who represent them.
