

Wednesday, November 9, 2016

Independence key to thorough, fair mining review

Grain Producers SA is calling for independence in the review of South Australia's mining acts, as well as an extension to the timeframe to enable growers to respond without being in the full swing of harvest.

GPSA CEO Darren Arney says the State Government is proposing its Department of State Development conduct the review. However the department is both the promoter of SA's mining industry, which is in direct conflict with its role as the industry's regulator.

"For the Department of State Development to conduct the review is like playing a football game with umpires from only one team on the field. Independence cannot be guaranteed when the department is so close to the mining and approvals process and so far removed from primary production," he said.

"GPSA believes that along with the independent review of the Mining Act, a review of the dual role of the Department of State Development should also be undertaken.

"With an export value of \$2.2 billion, the grains industry is a significant earner for SA and must be part of this review, given the mining industry's impacts on our capacity to continue productivity at this rate."

Mr Arney said GPSA's preferred option for the review was either an independent panel, or at least an independent arbitrator – as was recently chosen by the New South Wales and Queensland governments when they reviewed their acts.

GPSA is also seeking an extension to the consultation period. With harvest 2016-17 just starting and looking like one of the biggest on record, growers will need to prioritise securing their years' worth of income during the current proposed consultation period.

"Given 41.5% of SA's land area – including 95% of Yorke Peninsula and 90% of Eyre Peninsula – are subject to mining exploration leases, we know they will want to have direct input to the process. It is just not fair to growers to conduct such an important review in their busiest time of year. A deadline of March 2017 would be fairer, not December 2016," Mr Arney said.

GPSA has written to Premier Jay Weatherill highlighting these issues and outlined further impacts of mining on the grains industry, as outlined in GPSA's mining policy, available at www.grainproducerssa.com.au

ENDS

For interviews: Darren Arney, GPSA chief executive officer, 0448 186 707