

22nd December 2015

Mr Brett Finlay
President
National Farmers Federation
Locked Bag 9
KINGSTON ACT 2604

atankey@nff.org.au

Dear Mr Finlay

Re: NFF PROPOSED NATIONAL LAND USE POLICY

Grain Producers SA (GPSA) is the peak industry body for the nearly 3,000 grain producers in this South Australia. The State's grain industries are large and diverse, making a significant contribution to the economy. Total grain production in South Australia for the 2014-15 season was 7.63 million tonnes from 4.04 million hectares. With an estimated farm gate value of over \$1.8 billion and export value of \$2.2 billion, the grains industry is not only a major contributor to this state's economy it is also a significant export earner for this state.

South Australia's food industry is vital to its economy. The industry generated more than \$15.3 billion revenue in 2013-14. Food exports from South Australia accounted for \$3.7 billion or 32% of total merchandise exports in 2013-14. It is estimated that the agribusiness sector employs approximately 1 in 5 South Australian workers.¹ The importance of agriculture to this state cannot be emphasised enough. In fact, a recent report by BankSA has sited the food industry as the growth industry to watch and at the very core of this industry are our farms.

GPSA takes the issue of protecting farmer's rights to farm very seriously and has established an Agricultural Security and Priority (ASAP) sub-committee reporting to the GPSA Board. The aim of this sub-committee is to advocate for the priority and security of viable agricultural production over any other proposed form of land use, and to advocate for protecting the value of farm assets and the health and wellbeing of farmers.

Climate change and global population growth make it even more vital to protect our premium food producing areas. There are 98.4 million hectares of land within South Australia. Of this, only 4.2 million hectares is used for agriculture. The ability to be able to protect this land for future production is a priority for GPSA.

Therefore we were very interested to read in the Farmweekly article "Moves to protect farmland" by C Bettles on 5 November 2015 that the NFF were planning to develop a National Land Use policy that aims to protect "the best of the best" farmland from mining. The threat of mining incursions onto farming land is taken very seriously by GPSA and we have recently released a draft Mining Policy which advocates for no mining on agricultural land. We have prepared this policy following significant consultation with farmers across the State. Again, in this State only 4% of our arable land is used for agriculture and we want to protect that land from any incursions, especially mining. We have attached a copy of our draft Mining Policy for your reference.

GPSA has also been involved in Governmental workshops and submissions looking at rural to rural and rural to urban interface issues; buffer zones; current planning policies; the State Governments recently released draft Multiple Land Use Framework etc. As you can see we have already undertaken

¹ http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/premium_food_and_wine/food

significant work in this area of land use policy and would very much like to be included in the development process for the NFF National Land Use Policy.

The criteria for selecting which land should be protected is particularly important to us. The mention in the article of the need to protect the best land such as land suitable for double-cropping and irrigated farming systems concerns us. South Australia is a dry State with highly restricted access to irrigation and underground water sources, so the vast majority of our agricultural production comes from dry land cropping. Despite what could be seen by our interstate counterparts as working with less valuable/arable land, South Australian farmers still manage to contribute significantly to this State's economy. Therefore, we believe that for a National land use policy to be truly effective it must take into account state by state differences in land types, productivity, farming systems etc.

Protecting viable farming systems from mining incursions is an important step in ensuring that there is still land left for producing the nation's food. We commend the NFF on the proposal to develop a National Land Use Policy and would welcome the opportunity to be part of the development of this policy. Please don't hesitate to contact the GPSA Chief Executive Darren Arney on 0448 186 707 to invite him to be part of this process.

Yours sincerely



Garry Hansen
Chairman
Grain Producers SA Ltd