



Your strong and independent
voice for livestock producers

LIVESTOCK SA...

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Mr Bill McIntosh

Chair

Outback Communities Authority

PO Box 2353, PORT AUGUSTA SA 5700

Email: DPTI.OutbackCommunitiesAuthority@sa.gov.au; oca@sa.gov.au

Dear Bill,

Business Plan and Budget

Livestock SA has been asked on behalf of those pastoralists who are members of Livestock SA to comment to the Outback Communities Authority on the annual business plan and budget 2020-21.

Their main concern is to ensure that beef and sheep producers in the Outback Communities area are represented as 'pastoralists' and not just as 'residents.' The unincorporated areas are not only the location of where their businesses are conducted but it is also their places of residence. Investments are not only financial but for many it is also of a personal nature through a variety of local memberships. Most feel that of late that the pastoral industry's identity has been lost, especially when it comes to future policy development and planning. This has been highlighted recently by the reviews of both the Pastoral Act and the Far North Prescribed Wells Area Water Allocation Plan where pastoralists have felt ignored and their rights as business people are being ignored in favour of the general community, environmentalists, indigenous, and mining interests to name only the major other groups.

It is appreciated the Outback Communities Authority has a difficult role, covering a vast area and with limited funding sources. As indicated in the annual business plan and budget 2020-21, the Authority has to attempt to provide local government type services for a large number of mainly very small communities. It is understandable that it is difficult to even begin to consider how pastoralists could be considered.

It is pleasing that within the 2020–21 key strategies to find some that will directly assist pastoralists. These include increased access to mobile and internet communications by 2025; an all-weather road network to key locations by 2030, including sealing the Strzelecki track; and sealing an additional 2 airstrips by 2022.

But it is disappointing for example that the first focus for 2020–21 is to "*develop an 'Economic Recovery Plan' that supports the promotion and reinvigoration of visitor economy severely affected by the economic downturn of both the extended drought and COVID-19 restrictions.*" What about the pastoralists severely affected by the drought, many who are now almost completely destocked?

Livestock SA had noted with concern in last year's State Budget, the removal of the Outer Areas Concession as well as introducing an Asset Sustainability Levy to be charged to outback landholders. We wrote to the Government protesting about both. It is now noted that the Outback Community Authority had sought an increase in funding, and the Levy had been proposed in response to this request. Pastoralists as well as Livestock SA would like to be involved in the proposed engagement process before any such levy is imposed.

Livestock SA would also like to work with the Outback Communities Authority on what further drought assistance is required for the region. Livestock SA has used its influence to try and ensure that relevant programs are available such as the pastoral lease rent rebate, further measures to deal with wild dogs, and expansion of the on-farm emergency water infrastructure rebate.

There is one aspect that we would like the Outback Communities Authority to become involved with, and that is to provide information to tourists and others travelling to the Far North to make them aware that it is not OK to camp on pastoral leases (particularly without approval), and to respect the rights of pastoralists by not travelling over their land, interfering with infrastructure (such as turning off water to troughs so that they can wash themselves), and interfering with the landscape and leaving rubbish. There is a general community attitude that outback areas are public lands for all to use. This attitude needs to be changed. We ask that the Authority not only reinforce this in any messaging around supporting outback tourism but lead a major campaign to emphasise that such behaviour is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Keynes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joe Keynes
PRESIDENT