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## Year in review – Livestock SA gears up for big 2016

By **GEOFF POWER**

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THINKING back over 2015, Livestock SA certainly lived up to its tagline ... ‘your strong and independent voice for livestock producers’.

There has been a raft of issues that we have acted for on behalf of producers. We believe in what we do and know that producers do too ... as evidenced by the increase in membership to 2657 producers, up from 1906 in December 2014.



We coordinated a fodder register for the Sampson Flat and Pinery fires. In those two fires alone, 125 families lost their homes and numerous businesses lost machinery, stock and other assets.

We’ve spoken for producers in the Far North and South East about drought and communicated the toll it takes on farms as small to medium businesses. While the Far North received some benefits in the water infrastructure grants scheme that was administered for the government by Livestock SA, the SE is still waiting to see meaningful support from the State Government.

We’ve supported members in the South East in their continued battle against fracking and made a submission to the Inquiry into Unconventional Gas (Fracking) by the SA Parliament’s Natural Resources Committee.

We fought for – and won – the case to have the Pastoral Board retained. In partnership with Primary Producers SA and the State Government, a raft of transport issues, including for the livestock industry, were identified and collated. Resolution to these issues is currently being worked through by PPSA and the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.

We have and continue to push for a transaction levy on cattle, instead of the current unfair tag-based levy. We believe this must happen to ensure collection of funds is equitably distributed across the industry. We have written numerous submissions on behalf of producers, which are all available on the website.

Getting young people into shearing sheds - and keeping them there - has been one of the toughest jobs facing the wool industry. Livestock SA helped establish the WoolTAG Toolbox for shearers and shedhands who graduate through TAFE and on-farm training, thanks to generous support from industry sponsors.

The good news story of the year for Livestock SA has been our support of the SA Sheep Industry Blueprint. With the SA Sheep Advisory Group, we initiated the blueprint to develop a plan for the industry's growth, together with actions and strategies that will attract the funding we need to see that plan come to fruition. The blueprint will be launched in 2016.

So it has been a big year and 2016 is shaping up to be bigger. Two of our top issues already on the radar are natural resource management and biosecurity.

Increases to the NRM levy because of government cost-recovery is going to be a big issue and the extent to which the NRM increases will impact producers is just starting to be realised. Increases have been flagged with levy payers in most, if not all, NRM regions. In the SE alone, an extra \$1.8 million in 2015-16 and \$2.26m in 2016-17 has to be recovered. Who knows what the cost recovery total will be across the state.

Livestock SA will work with government as it rolls out 'One Biosecurity' – aimed to reduce the cost of biosecurity for an endemic disease in SA by moving away from state regulation to self-regulation, where possible, on-farm. We also want to progress our relationship with the Pastoral Board and bed down the state's Wild Dog Action Plan to reduce the impacts of the predator on our sheep, cattle and goat numbers.

Finally, I would like to thank Livestock SA's board, regional representatives and staff for their commitment in 2015 and wish all producers a safe and prosperous 2016.