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23 March 2016

Mr Eric Sommerville
Presiding Member
Northern and Yorke NRM Board
2/17 Lennon St,
CLARE SA 5453
(Email: dewnr.nrny@sa.gov.au)

Dear Mr Sommerville,

Livestock SA is aware that the time for comments relating to the Northern and Yorke NRM Board's draft business plan 2016-2019 has closed. However we would like to put forward our views on proposed future regional NRM levies and NRM water levies. Livestock SA has made similar responses to all NRM Boards in South Australia (except for the Alinytjara Wilurara NRM Board).

Livestock SA is concerned about the proposed increase in the NRM levies by NRM Boards throughout the State. Whilst we appreciate that your levies are relatively low compared to many others in the State we are concerned about the financial impost on farming enterprises. As members of the NRM Board would be aware agriculture has been under financial duress in recent times due to late opening rains and a lack of a spring finish; putting a significant strain on livestock enterprises. We are keen to see proposed levies take into account the financial realities of farming cash-flows.

We congratulate the Board on the efforts it has made in promoting agricultural practices in the area and supporting activities leading to improved productivity however we believe in these difficult times constraints on expenditure are necessary. We need to live within our means and respect the difficulties many livestock producers currently face.

Rather than an increase, given the seasonal conditions, the NRM Board needed to ask for a freeze on any increases at least until conditions improve. It is extremely callous to even be considering any increases at this time.

Producers continue to question what benefits they will get from paying increased levies, or indeed from their current levies. There needs to be a benefit cost analysis on current NRM programs and projects and as a result of this analysis, some programs and projects will need to either be cancelled or quickly finished. The Board needs to get back to its core business and assist a sustainable productive agriculture sector. Producers constantly ask what percentage of NRM income is actually spent on 'on ground projects' and how much is spent on administration.

Livestock SA, as a member of Primary Producers SA, supports the call for an independent review of the water management costs (see attached media release). Primary Producers SA has also made comments about NRM Boards' revised business plans which Livestock SA endorses. The Northern and Yorke NRM Board is asked to support this call for an independent review.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Geoff Power', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Geoff Power
President