



Your strong and independent voice for livestock producers

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Productive Economy Policy Discussion Paper
Submission from Livestock SA, February 2019

Livestock SA wishes to comment mainly on those parts of the Productive Economy Policy Discussion Paper dealing with agriculture.

It is our understanding that the State Planning Commission has produced the Productive Economy Policy Discussion Paper as part of the proposed Planning and Design Code being created. And that this will be a single planning rulebook, hopefully leading to a more efficient, responsive and effective planning system.

Livestock SA represents sheep, beef cattle and goat producers in South Australia, and as one of the largest industries in relation to land area grazed in this State, it is essential that their views are included in making changes in the State's planning system. The area of grazing land operated by beef cattle/sheep businesses has been estimated to be almost 50 million hectares, more than half the total area of South Australia (ABARE–BRS 2010¹).

It is stated that the Discussion Paper “focuses on the role the planning system can play in protecting and growing key industries.” From a Livestock SA perspective, we are not quite sure if this has been achieved.

We certainly support Target 1 in the *30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide* of “containing our urban footprint and protecting our resources” and the aim for all new housing to be contained in metropolitan Adelaide or in established townships.

As the livestock industries Livestock SA is involved with are mainly broadacre, there appears to be no mention of how to protect these from other than urban development. There is often the potential for conflict with both mining and more intensive agriculture, mainly horticulture and viticulture, as well as limiting factors to expanding livestock production, particularly access to water at a reasonable price.

¹ ABARE–BRS 2010, Land use of Australia 2005–06, version 4, Australian Bureau of Agricultural Resource Economics–Bureau of Rural Sciences, Canberra.

In relation to increasing exploration and production in the energy and resources industries, it is not only necessary to address environmental impacts, but the conflict with agriculture. While this conflict is highlighted where exploration and mining happen on highly valued cropping land, in the case of livestock, the producers who have expressed the most concern about the impact of mining exploration and associated activities are from the pastoral region. Pastoralists would like to have more input into exploration plans similar to the consideration that is given to indigenous people. While pastoralists do not own the land they operate on, for much of South Australia's pastoral region, they do invest considerable funds for infrastructure improvements particularly secure water supplies, and they should be treated like any other landowner. Rehabilitation of pastoral land (or lack thereof) is also a huge issue and there appears to be no desire to enforce the rehabilitation conditions. As custodians of the land, pastoralists are held responsible for its condition, whether they caused the damage or not and this, and the associated costs in time and money from dealing with this need to be acknowledged.

There also needs to be mention of how to handle conflict between broadacre agriculture (which livestock is part of) and horticulture/viticulture. Currently land used for broadacre use can be planted/developed for grapes or horticulture crops without any planning approvals. If we are to protect and grow existing broadacre agriculture and to avoid conflict with other agricultural pursuits, there needs to be policies ensuring that with any change in agricultural use that buffer zones are established and that these are the responsibility of the landowner changing the land use. Similarly, current infrastructure (such as shearing sheds, stockyards, hay and implement sheds), and any expansion, replacement or new build required by livestock producers should not be affected by a neighbouring agricultural change in land use. Livestock SA had raised this issue last year in a submission to the *Review of the Character Preservation (Barossa Valley) Act 2012 and Character Preservation (McLaren Valley) Act 2012* (see attachment) and we would like this issue to be considered by the State Planning Commission as part of establishing a new planning system for South Australia.



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Review of the Character Preservation (Barossa Valley) Act 2012 and Character Preservation (McLaren Valley) Act 2012

Submission from Livestock SA, February 2018

Livestock SA represents and promotes the interests of beef cattle, sheep and goat producers in South Australia. It currently has over 3,500 members, predominantly sheep and cattle producers, spread throughout the State. This includes livestock producers in the Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale, and it is on their behalf this submission is made, particularly those in the Barossa Valley.

The discussion paper released to lead this review was disappointing. It ignores agriculture even though these Acts are essentially about retaining the farming landscape in these two regions.

The economic assessment in the discussion paper only concentrates on numbers of visitors staying in these regions and their expenditure while they are visiting. There is a need for a detailed assessment of the impact of the Acts on agriculture, and the effect on future viability of agriculture. If agriculture does not remain profitable then it will very difficult to preserve the current character.

It is absolutely vital to ensure both regions have a strong economic future, and this includes farming businesses. This is crucial if agriculture is going to have a chance to continue to be viable in these areas and not compromised. It is known that there are primary producers who have moved from both the Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale to other parts of the State in a bid to buy larger amounts of land for economies of scale, to be able to undertake farming activities with fewer restrictions, with lower costs of production, and so that their family can continue to profitably farm. The economic assessment needs to include whether this trend has continued in the past five years under these Acts, and if so what does this mean for trying to continue to maintain the character of these two regions.

The environmental assessment in the discussion paper also give agriculture scant attention. It only mentions the interface between primary production and townships/dwellings. There is no mention of the increasing difficulties broadacre farmers with livestock are facing as the area under vines increases, even though in the main broadacre agriculture makes up much of the landscape that the Acts are trying to preserve.

The Review of the two Acts should be an opportunity to not only review but to consider how the Acts need to be altered. As it is at present, about all the legislation does is reduce the breakup of farming properties for lifestyle blocks or retirement villages. The current legislation does not protect the right to farm.

The definition of the character values is not broad enough. The legislation should not only provide protection to character values within the prescribed areas but also provide protection to the farming communities within the prescribed areas.

The protection should be expanded so that it relates to respecting the rights associated with owning land, the right to go about lawful farming practises without disturbance or litigation and to protect the “right to farm” for those producing agricultural produce in these regions. And this protection should include the right to erect necessary infrastructure to improve farm productivity or improve management practises. The types of infrastructure envisaged include stock yards, shearing sheds, milking sheds, hay sheds, and implement sheds as well as on-farm silos.

Broadacre farming in the Barossa Valley should be protected in the legislation. When a near or abutting neighbouring landowner or land purchaser wishes to change farming activities from broadacre farming to planting vines or other horticultural crops they need to be made aware of the risks they are taking. This includes the possibility of spray drift from nearby broadacre farming enterprises and the potential damage that may occur. The broadacre sector needs to be protected from inappropriate change of enterprises and should not be liable for any damages occurring due to normal activities undertaken on a broadacre farming property.

If a change of enterprise is proposed, then that applicant should be responsible for setting aside enough land in the form of a buffer zone to provide any protection deemed necessary between the two enterprises. It is not the responsibility of the existing broadacre farm owner to provide such a buffer zone. This should be included in the legislation.

If the farming communities in the area are helped rather than hindered, opportunities for greater economic growth may increase. This could far exceed anything that will be obtained by increasing the number of available tourist beds or expanding the number of cafes in the area.

Without such changes, local councils in these regions will continue to give scant attention to primary production areas within their council areas when faced with developmental proposals.

In reviewing these Acts, the current boundaries also need to be assessed. Particularly in the Character Preservation (Barossa Valley) Act 2012 there is confusion of where some of the boundaries are. If local government boundaries were used, this would assist in clarifying the boundaries.