

Press Release - ACCC Update Report on the Cattle and beef market study

The Cattle Producers Australia (CPA) Implementation Committee chaired by Dr Paul Wright says, “We are clearly enthused that the ACCC continue to push for long needed reform in the industry and we congratulate Commissioner Mick Keogh on the work he and his team at the ACCC have undertaken to follow-up on the recommendations of the Cattle and Beef Market Study.”

Dr Wright is pleased the ACCC has given recognition to the fact that the reform process has stalled, and it is evident that the current industry organisations are not correctly structured and are not capable of accommodating the necessary reforms required by grass-fed cattle levy payers under the present industry structures.

Dr Wright said, “The recent Update Report clearly demonstrates the ACCC’s surprise at the degree of resistance against their recommendations from the many national industry bodies that represent the interests of some producers. It goes on to provide the view that much of the inaction relates to entrenched industry positions and a desire to keep the market impenetrable, limiting the bargaining power of producers and their ability to push for change. Commissioner Keogh says, *Inaction suggests that either industry participants do not understand the value of transparency, or it does not suit the interests of those who are in a position to make improvements.*”

The Senate inquiry convened in 2013 into the industry structures, the Inquiry into the Consolidation of meat processor market power and the ACCC study have consulted widely across Australia, “So for Mr Mackay to claim in his press release that the ACCC is not listening to industry is a failure on his part to listen to producers” Dr Wright says.

Under the current structure the grass-fed cattle levy payers are largely unrepresented in the decision-making process. The CPA seeks to address these shortcomings in producer representation by mandating that every grass-fed cattle levy payer has direct input and voting power in an organisation to specifically represent them. “Perhaps under these altered circumstances, Mr Mackay might have an opportunity to gauge what producer sentiment really is.” Dr Wright said.

Dr Wright goes on to say, “The current industry bodies are acting shamefully in disputing all the findings from the two Senate inquiries and the ACCC red meat study, and to suggest the evidence has not been forthcoming fails to recognise the content of the dozens of submissions that were put to the inquiry”.

Cattle Producers Australia has been established in accordance with the historical, unified agreement back in 2015 of all industry bodies, including Cattle Council of Australia, to establish a new democratic organisation to represent all grass-fed cattle levy payers. CPA’s constitution will stipulate direct grass-fed cattle producer voting power to determine its policy.

CPA was recently incorporated, and plans are underway to launch a membership drive in early June.



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