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for immediate release

Cattle Producers Australia slams Don Mackay's Opinion Piece 16 August, Farmonline.

Cattle Producers Australia (CPA) Chair, Dr Paul Wright, slammed the comments made by Don Mackay, Chair of the Red Meat Advisory Council (RMAC) in his comments on [Farmonline's 'Opinion'](#) (16/8/18).

CPA's Dr Wright says there is absolutely no merit in exploring the risks and benefits of turning three service providers into one; and merging our six red meat industry councils.

"The meagre influence which grass-fed cattle producers currently have would be further diluted to the point of being non-existent if the industry representational structures suggested by Mr MacKay were to be implemented."

"The obvious problem that exists is that the six red meat industry councils have competing vested interests, and to try to influence change for producers may not necessarily be in the best interests of processors or other parties, which may stymie progress," he said.

RMAC is critical of Government being involved in our industry and issued a statement that we need to stop the cycle of government-led inquiries and policy uncertainty.

Dr Wright said, "What Mr Mackay doesn't so clearly point out is that farmers across Australia have called for these inquiries."

The ACCC Cattle and Beef Market study – Update report supports producer calls for reform, and Mr Keogh has regularly stated his concerns with the Red Meat Advisory Council's reluctance to vigorously pursue the recommendations made in the report. As a consequence, the ACCC plan to engage directly with the Commonwealth and State Governments through the Agriculture Ministers' Forum, to push for reform to improve transparency between supply chain participants.

Dr Wright cites the ACCC has regularly conveyed their view that the inaction from RMAC and industry leaders appears to relate to entrenched industry positions or roles, and a desire to keep the market opaque. This, Mr Keogh claims, clearly impacts directly on cattle producers by reducing their bargaining power and limiting their ability to push for change.

"The ACCC's attempts to ensure that Australia's cattle producers are operating in a truly competitive market are being undermined by the comments from the RMAC Chair who has said that industry does not want the proposed reforms, and that ACCC is out of touch with the industry," he said.

Under the current structure, grass-fed cattle levy payers are largely unrepresented in the decision-making process. The CPA has addressed these shortcomings in producer representation by mandating that grass-fed levy-payers have direct input and voting power to specifically represent them.

The CPA Constitution provides for direct grass-fed cattle producer voting power to determine its policy, and if all six red meat industry councils were merged, this power would be lost.

We urge farmers to join CPA <https://cattleproducers.com.au/join/> so their voice can be heard and we can push for reform; support the recommendation from the ACCC report; and push for the recommendations from the recent Red Meat Senate Inquiry into market power; and the earlier Senate Inquiry into the Structures and Systems governing levies.

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About Cattle Producers Australia

Cattle Producers Australia Ltd (CPA) is the new voice on issues that affect grass-fed cattle production businesses. We offer a new era of leadership in advocacy and governance for the grass-fed cattle industry. As a democratically elected organisation, all grass-fed cattle producer members have voting rights and equal opportunity to stand for election. Policy Advisory Councilors will be elected from 15 regions across Australia. Control of CPA will be directly in the hands of grass-fed levy paying cattle producers.

For more information or to become a free member of CPA, please visit:

<https://cattleproducers.com.au/>

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