

Cattle group calls for fairness

BY JODIE O'SULLIVAN

CATTLE Producers Australia members have sought clarity on the proposed restructure of the Cattle Council of Australia at the council's recent AGM.

Cattle Producers Australia (CPA) chair Dr Paul Wright has raised concerns the cattle council's draft proposal "does not appear to satisfy the requirements of a truly democratic model for representation for grass-fed cattle levy payers".

CCA chief executive Margo Andrae reportedly explained the new organisation was a "direct elect model" in which individual levy payers will vote for a traditional fiduciary board of directors who will have an oversight role.

Policy is to be developed and delivered by a series of consultative committees but Dr Wright said there had been no confirmation members of those committees were to be democratically elected.

And when asked about the uneven representation between State Farm Organisations (SFOs) and independents, CCA chair Howard Smith reported that the organisation relied heavily on SFOs and their membership fees so they had a right to have members sit the consultative committees.

Dr Wright claims SFO contribution "represents a

relatively small proportion" of the total CCA budget, with the main contributors being the Red Meat Advisory Council and Meat and Livestock Australia.

He claims there are democratic discrepancies in the new CCA draft model.

He said the direct-elect board voted on by levy-payers did not appear to develop or deliver policy; instead it only oversaw policy created by the committees.

"This is a real concern for the industry, after all the senate inquiries and industry studies that have provided recommendations for reform we are still being dealt a false sense of democracy by industry leaders," he said.

Earlier this month at Eldorado, agriculture minister David Littleproud called on cattle producer representative bodies to reunite for the good of the industry.

In October 2017, funding of \$500,000 from the Leadership in Agriculture Fund was approved to fund the implementation of a new representative grass-fed cattle producer body.

However the funding stream was withheld after CCA members unilaterally withdrew from the reform process in January, 2018.

Dr Wright has emphasised the need for a democratic model designed after whole of industry agreement in 2015.