

INQUIRY INTO ASPECTS OF AGRICULTURE IN NSW

Organisation: Carrathool Shire Council
Name: Mr Ken Croskell
Position: General Manager
Telephone: 6965 1306
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**CARRATHOOL SHIRE COUNCILS SUBMISSION TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON STATE DEVELOPMENT INQUIRY INTO THE
AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY IN NSW**



Carrathool Shire Council believes that the following general impediments are the major restrictions to the viability of agriculture both within this Shire and indeed across NSW:

- The current capping restrictions placed on the various river and groundwater systems, established without any detailed scientific evidence to support the capping figures, and imposed on the advice of doubtful “historical” evidence garnered by an increasingly green bureaucracy. Council would question why the same restrictions to water allocations are not placed on the mining industry in NSW and in particular coal mine production – is agriculture paying the price for other industries?
- The increasing restrictions placed on agricultural operations through governmental red tape and bureaucratic restrictions; an example is the need for sixteen different licences to establish a yabbie farm – no wonder the majority of potential investors don’t bother.

Council is concerned that there appears to be a concerted effort to hinder agricultural production which will see the life blood of many small rural communities (and indeed larger regional centres relying on their resources) denuded – the government and the bureaucracy should be assisting agricultural production to assist with the viability of small rural communities and to reverse the drift of population to the eastern seaboard!

Specifically Council sees the following issues as impacting on agricultural production and providing an impediment to the viability of agricultural businesses:

- The decline in infrastructure expenditure and subsequent eroding of our important infrastructure assets such as roads, rail, dams and other water management assets. If today’s practices and resource allocations were utilised in the past then we would not have schemes such as the Snowy River Scheme and the MIA, to name a few, which are vital to agricultural production and to the economy of rural NSW.
- The separation of land and water for valuation purposes has been a nightmare for Councils and for their ratepayers – this is seen as totally unnecessary and another example of the bureaucracy running the state.
- Water trading is seen as detrimental to agricultural production particularly when it is done across river valley and state borders and it has the propensity to devastate small rural communities – the only real beneficiaries of water trading will be the water traders not the communities which will lose the licences and hence the attendant agricultural production!

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- Motor vehicle and truck registration costs and rigid RTA enforcement of minor weight and dimension requirements need to be addressed to ensure that rural operators are not unnecessarily penalised for the sake of a minor contribution to the state coffers.
- The doubling up of state and federal taxes (eg fuel taxes) is seen as another impost on all communities and, because of the reliance of agricultural production on transport, an additional burden to this significant cost factor of getting products to market.

Council hopes, indeed pleads, that this inquiry will provide an impetus for the NSW Government and their bureaucracy to gain a greater understanding of the needs of rural NSW and the necessity to support, not hinder, agricultural production to assist in the economic well being of the state and to provide a healthy balance between rural and metropolitan NSW.

This means that they do not set about to destroy small rural communities but to provide resources and political and legislative support which actively encourages their development and ongoing survival.

Ken Croskell
General Manager

14th August 2007