



24 July 2020

Dr Sally Talbot MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Legislation
Parliament House
4 Harvest Tce
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Via email: lclc@parliament.wa.gov.au

Dear Dr Talbot

RE: Agricultural Produce Commission (APC) Amendment Bill 2019

The National Farmers' Federation (NFF) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Western Australian Standing Committee on Legislation inquiry into the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill 2019 (the Bill).

The NFF was established in 1979 as the national peak body representing farmers and the agriculture sector more broadly across Australia. The NFF's membership comprises all of Australia's major agricultural commodities across the breadth and the length of the supply chain. Operating under a federated structure, individual farmers join their respective state farm organisation and/or national commodity council. These organisations form the NFF.

The NFF believes that all farmers and pastoralists should have access to the same opportunities when it comes to the advancement of their industry sector. In Western Australia (WA) the Agricultural Produce Commission (APC) provides certain agricultural industries with the ability to establish producer-led committees in response to an industry request. This enables the collection of self-determined funds under a fee for service framework to provide services (such as research, marketing and promotion) required by the producers in an industry. The NFF understands that the primary objective of an APC committee is to enable producers to work together for common goals. The NFF is supportive of this process, which facilitates coordinated resourcing of services for the benefit of industry in WA.

Currently, the *Agricultural Produce Commission Act 1988* allows committees to be established in relation to any agricultural industry, except for broadacre cropping and grazing industries. The Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill seeks to remove this exclusion. The NFF strongly supports this amendment, which will



make the APC fee for service mechanism available to all farmers and pastoralists in Western Australia.

As the APC is a state-specific institution, the NFF has consulted with our member organisation, the Western Australian Farmers Federation (WA Farmers), in the development of this submission. WA Farmers, as the industry body representing the highest proportion of broadacre farmers in WA, has a solid understanding of the priorities of those who would be impacted by the measures in the Bill. WA Farmers, through an extensive engagement process, has identified overwhelming industry support for making the APC framework open to all farmers and pastoralists. The NFF supports the WA Farmers submission in its entirety, noting its strong support for the passage of the Bill, particularly the removal of the exclusion of broadacre cropping and grazing from the Act, and the request that an opt out provision be included along with a mechanism for weighted voting.

The NFF understands that to date, the APC has been utilised successfully for industry benefit by the WA horticultural, wine, pork and poultry sectors. A significant feature of this success can be attributed to the industry-led nature of the APC. The NFF understand that if passed, changes to the legislative framework would allow for the creation of regulations which offer an opt-out option. The NFF strongly support the WA Farmers recommendation that once the Bill passes, the WA Government fast track the development of an opt-out provision, to take effect on commencement of the amendments to the Act.

Agriculture is a rapidly changing industry. It is more important than ever to ensure the industry takes a unified and effective approach to complex challenges that exist across areas such as chemical registration, biosecurity, social license and infrastructure. Amendment of the existing legislation will provide access to a coordinated, equitable and efficient structure to address industry identified priorities in Western Australia.

Should you require any further information in relation to this submission, please contact Adrienne Ryan, General Manager Rural Affairs at the National Farmers' Federation, on 02 6269 5666 or aryan@nff.org.au.

Yours sincerely,

TONY MAHAR
Chief Executive Officer