

# Submission into the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill 2019

## Submission

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**WA GRAINS GROUP INC.**

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## July 2020

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W.A. Grains Group Inc. Putting Western Australian Grain Grower First

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## Introduction

The WA Grains Group (Inc) (WAGG) is a grower financed, and grower driven group, focused on delivering economic gain to growers.

The objects of WA Grains Group are:

- i) To represent the Western Australian grain industry in the areas of production, marketing, plant breeding, agronomic development, storage and handling, processing, bio-security, transport and any other issues in order to promote, sustain and safe-guard the Western Australian grain industry in the longer term
- ii) To encourage profitable and sustainable production and marketing of the Western Australian grain crop.
- iii) To carry out, promote or assist in activities of any kind associated with the development, production, handling, processing, promotion and competitive services of Western Australian grain and its derivatives.

**The WA Grains Group strongly opposes the amendment of the APC act in particular section 3 (1) where it deletes the exclusion of broad acre cropping and grazing industries from the APC act.**

The reasons for this are that it has the potential to replicate the other major levies that already exist, as follows.

1. For Grain it would replicate the GRDC and the IFS levies
2. For Grazing it would replicate the MLA, the IFS and AWI levies

The track record of the APC shows that once a levy is introduced that the growers either, do not have a choice or have great difficulty in opting out of a levy.

An example of this is the GRDC levy, where many growers fail to see any value for their levy. There is also no mechanism for removing this levy and no way of controlling the rate of the levy.

It was recently pointed out by our current minister it is unfair to the growers that have to pay the bulk of the levy to receive less benefit than those from a small vocal minority that forced it on them. It has happened in the past with the APC system.



**Further to this no levy should ever be introduced without the identification of all potential levy payers.**

1. The introduction of any new levy needs to be based on more than 50% of growers who will be required to pay the levy to vote in favour for its introduction.
2. The same process should apply to the term of the levy and the rate of any new levy.
3. This is not how it is currently.
4. As it is now only 50% of those that participate in a vote to introduce a new levy can force a new levy on an industry.

**If the act is amended to include broad acre cropping and grazing, further amendments would be required of the APC act to make it more grower friendly.**

1. The removal of APC compliance officers.
2. Members of the Committee are to be voted on to the committee by the levy payers, not appointed.
3. There needs to be a power of veto and a sunset clause.
4. Any new levies need to allow the grower to opt in rather than opt out (voluntary).
5. The opting in needs to be offered on an annual basis.
6. This means that any new levy that is deemed to be of value to an industry will receive the support that is required.

**In conclusion, it is time to be reducing the cost burden on farmers, not looking at ways to create more unaccountable, open ended, funded committees that produce red, green and environmental tape and achieve extraordinarily little.**

Regards,



Doug Smith  
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