

Mr. Tim Watling,
Secretary,
Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References committee,

Dear Sir,

Regarding the proposed Senate inquiry into the collection and disbursement of levies in the grass fed beef industries:

A camel has been described as a horse designed by a committee. The current CCA proposal for the restructure of industry funding and representation is another camel and if allowed to proceed will prove to be an albatross.

The inequities of the present system are too long standing and entrenched to be adequately addressed by tinkering around the edges.

A whole new approach is required.

There is absolutely no valid reason why the Australian Beef Industry needs two organizations to handle policy formation and service delivery.

What grass fed beef producers of Australia desperately need is one democratically elected body with total control of all monies collected through the \$5 per head transaction levy.

CCA is not representative of the grass fed levy paying producers of Australia.

To label it a "Peak Council" is patently dishonest.

Its members come from SFO's (State Farm Organizations) which, collectively, with the exception of the Northern Territory Cattlemens Assn., represent less than 25% of the aforesaid producers.

MLA is not a democratically elected body. It is a virtual closed shop.

When replacement board members are required the "Selection Committee" puts up only the number of candidates required to fill the current vacancies.

This selection committee is comprised of 3 sitting board members, 1 member each from CCA, SMC, and ALFA, and three members elected by producers at the MLA AGM (1 person elected by cattle producers, 1 elected by sheep producers and 1 elected by lot feeders.)

The 70% or more of the grass fed levy payers who are not members of SFO's have the opportunity, if present at the AGM, to vote for "1" member of the 9 man committee.

This is a blatant case of " Taxation without Representation" and it must change.

To suggest producers can have a say in the running of MLA by joining a SFO is ludicrous.

This is quite simply a form of blackmail by people whose actions, or lack thereof, have chased producers away in droves.

Those who support this grossly unfair system are treating with contempt the vast majority of grass fed cattle producers who provide the bulk of the \$56 odd million collected annually from the transaction levy.

The real needs of the grass fed beef producers of Australia have been ignored for too long in favour of a humiliating subservience to the processors and the duopoly controlling 50% of the retail sales of meat.

We demand, and are entitled to, a democratically elected body to oversee our industry and have total control of the compulsory \$5 per head transaction levy.

Thanking you for the opportunity to make this submission to your committee.

Yours faithfully, John Andison.