

# BEAT

## Air Services

### Regional Air Services

**04 Oct EC** That the Association:

- (a) Participate in a summit of regional airline operators and interest groups to develop proposals to ensure open competition in the provision of air access to facilities at Kingsford Smith Airport by NSW regional carriers, and;
- (b) Support the extension of the powers of the ACCC to conduct periodic inquiries or other investigations into the competitive conduct of airport operations and the compliance of airport operators with any legislated obligations upon them for access by regional carriers.

**01 Oct EC** Call on both the Government and the Opposition to urgently review areas where government policy, regulations or practice impose an unfair cost burden or barrier to entry on small regional airline operators and act to remove or reduce that burden.

**00 May GC** That the Association vigorously pursue a policy that includes the right of regional airlines to operate to and from Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport on an economic basis.

The Association seeks that:

- (a) the intrastate airline industry should be deregulated; and
- (b) deregulation should go hand in hand with the review and overhaul of regulation and air traffic management and rescheduling at Kingsford Smith Airport.

**96 Feb GC** That the NSW Farmers' Association request that the Federal Government:

- (a) as a community service obligation, provide further assistance to regional communities in the form of funds for major repairs and maintenance projects to selected regional airports, such as resealing runways which is beyond the means of smaller communities and the aviation industry;
  - (b) abolish peak period surcharges and give regional airlines equal priority access to Kingsford Smith Airport; and
  - (c) not apply any new airport tax, such as the proposed noise abatement tax, to regional commuter flights
- 94 Oct GC.**

## Banking and Finance

### Bank Mergers

That the Association seek the prevention of further amalgamation of Australian trading banks, if this would reduce competition between banks.

### Capital Adequacy Ratios

The Association seeks that:

- (a) the capital adequacy ratios imposed by the RBA on the trading bank sector be reviewed to more accurately reflect levels of commercial risk; and
- (b) mortgages to farmers should have their capital adequacy requirement reduced to that applying to mortgages on private homes in the interim.

### Farm Debt Mediation

**Feb EC** That the Association support the repealing of

- (a) Section 11(3)

If the Authority does not issue a certificate because the Authority is not satisfied that the creditor had attempted to mediate in good faith throughout the 3 months referred to in subsection (1) (c) (iii), the creditor must not:

- (a) give notice to the farmer under section 8, or
  - (b) make an invitation referred to in section 11 (2) (c),
- in respect of the farm debt involved for a period of 12 months from the date on which the creditor receives notice of the Authority's decision to refuse to issue the certificate, unless the farmer agrees to a shorter period.
- (b) Section 29A(1)

A farmer or creditor who is aggrieved by a decision of the Authority to issue or to refuse to issue an exemption certificate or a certificate under section 11 may apply to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal for a review of the decision.

**AC 97** That the Association continue to press for the Farm Debt Mediation Act to:

- (a) redress the imbalance of power between farm families and the large, well-resourced banking corporations; and
- (b) ensure the independence of mediators.

### Financial Cooperatives

**AC 95** That the Association support the principle of the formation of rural financial co-operatives and companies.

### Insurance

**AC 03** That the Association work with Government and the insurance industry to minimise the impact of public liability insurance increases on rural communities.

## Insurance

**AC 02** That the Association takes a vigorous, pro-active approach to the lobbying of Governments to change current trends in regard to public liability, professional indemnity and property insurance with regard to the effect on the rural community, specifically:

- (a) limits to potential litigation, making individuals accountable for their own actions;
- (b) legislation to cap and structure public liability pay outs;
- (c) a public insurance system similar to that used in New Zealand to provide an insurance cover for non-profit community organisations;
- (d) a ban on litigation lawyers being allowed to tout for business on a “no win – no cost” basis; and
- (e) as a matter of urgency, seek a review of all aspects of the insurance industry, such as the laws governing insurance, both statute and common law and the impact that the various participants i.e. governments, courts, lawyers and insurance companies have on the cost of insurance to the rural community.

**AC 07** That the Association approach each insurance company which offers insurance cover to rural enterprises in NSW to clarify in writing the term “take responsible care” and the reasons for declining indemnity when a third party suffers personal injury or property damage under the farm liability policy.

## Interest Rates and Bank Margins

**01 Oct EC** Lobby the NSW Government to implement a concessional loan scheme along the lines of the Queensland scheme called the Primary Industries Productivity Enhancement Scheme.

**01 Oct EC** Lobby Government and financial institutions to develop a program of financial assistance, including low interest rate loans and Farm succession planning advice for young farmers to go into farming businesses.

**AC 99** That the Association seek that the Federal Government encourage a high level of competition in the rural finance sector and the provision of lowest cost, innovative products and services appropriate to the full range of farm businesses.

That the Association seek proper disclosure of borrower liability should occur through:

- (a) the development of an industry standard for the calculation of an effective interest rate;
- (b) all financial institutions quoting interest rates and all other charges as an annual in-arrears interest rate, calculated on an industry standard basis;
- (c) the industry standard being quoted on all advertising proposals and lending contracts;
- (d) the current industry standard rate being charged on all account statements;
- (e) a requirement that all finance institutions display details of interest rates and other charges on all financial statements;
- (f) all charges and penalties that may be incurred being advised freely and regularly to borrowers. If these principles are not adopted voluntarily by financial institutions, the government legislate to enforce them;

**AC 95** (g) the introduction by legislation of Actual

Total Cost (ATC) disclosure of lending costs by all financial bodies; and

- (h) lenders (including banks) be required by law to issue a prominent foreclosure warning in all loan documents, brochures and advertisements, stating that farms, houses and other security may be sold up and crops seized if borrowers default on loans;
- (i) banks being encouraged to maintain a presence in smaller rural centres by way of agencies and franchise service centres.

That the Association:

- (a) seek prompt passing on to borrowers of interest rate cuts;

**AC 96, AC 01 Reaffirmed** (b) and NFF initiate appropriate pressure on the Federal Government and financial institutions to make available to the rural sector long term, low interest finance;

**AC 96** (c) and NFF support the use of superannuation funds to provide long term lower interest loans for primary producers;

**AC 95** (d) seek a significant reduction in excessive bank margins;

- (e) seek a reduction in the margin between borrowing and lending rates;

**96 Apr GC** (f) seek to have excessive bank loan penalty

margins and charges reduced when the income of a farm enterprise is significantly reduced due to exceptional circumstances, a major drop in commodity prices; or other external factors causing a severe fall in expected income;

**AC 96** (g) seek that the SDR for farm property loans be varied to better reflect the risk associated with those loans as compared with the SDR and risk associated with residential property loans;

- (h) seek the elimination of discriminatory risk loadings on interest rates applied to primary producers;

- (i) seek the removal of State and Federal financial charges on borrowings; and

- (j) seek the use of export commodity currencies to deliver more favourable foreign interest rates direct to primary producers.

## Limitations on Liability

**04 Oct EC** That the Association seek clarification of the impact of recent Court decisions reported to have removed the limitations on the liability of trustee company directors and act, in conjunction with the NFF, to restore the limitations on liability as required.

## Reserve Bank

The Association supports the appointment of a representative of the farm sector to the Board of the Reserve Bank.

## Competitiveness of Agriculture

### Action plan for agriculture

**99 Oct GC** That the Association urgently reflect in practical policy means to address the poor economic position of the average farmer and the declining rural big picture.

**99 Feb GC** That the Association seek direct representation at the annual meetings convened to progress the "Action Plan for Agriculture".

**AC 96** That the Association, seek direct involvement and assist in developing that strategic plan for the future to enable Australia to:

- (a) facilitate the necessary structural change that will open access to markets on a world competitive basis; and
- (b) establish world's best practice principles in the quality and marketing of our products.

### Cost of Labour

**97 Feb GC** That the Association call on the Federal and NSW Governments to reduce the full costs to employers of hiring labour having regard to the implications of the current level of compulsory costs and taxes.

### Exchange Rate Competitiveness

**AC 02** Encourage the NFF to begin an education program to the Australian public indicating the benefits of a low exchange rate to the exporting industries.

That the Association seek that the:

- (a) Charter of the Reserve Bank of Australia be amended to ensure that the competitiveness of the Australian economy is the paramount consideration of the Reserve Bank;
- (b) Reserve Bank refrain from intervention in the currency market and allow the exchange rate to find its true levels;
- (c) setting of short term interest rates be at levels which discourage short term capital inflow;
- (d) provisions of the income tax system, which exempt certain overseas cash investments from withholding tax, be amended to create a tax environment that is neutral between domestic and overseas borrowings; and
- (e) Federal Government increase the withholding tax rates on interest income paid overseas to the average marginal tax rate paid by individuals within Australia.

**AC 04** That the Association double its endeavours in addressing Australian farmers' fallen terms of trade.

### Future of Agriculture

**AC 95** That on behalf of members, the highest priority of NSW Farmers' Association is to actively achieve more profitable and sustainable agriculture through:

- (a) significant incentives to upgrade plant and technology for conservation and production;
- (b) the identification and removal of adverse government and banking policy;
- (c) improved farm business management skills;
- (d) increasing farm returns by improving the efficiency of the marketing chain; and
- (e) encouraging youth in agriculture;
- (f) enlisting the active support of members and non-members at Branch and District Council levels to achieve these aims.

### Immigration

The Association supports that immigration levels be set on the basis of economic benefit.

### Input Costs

**AC 08** That the Association lobby the Government to have an ACCC inquiry into why agricultural inputs are rising considerably faster than the wholesale price index, despite an appreciating Australian dollar.

### International Competitiveness

**AC 08** Lobby against on-going legislation which adds cost to the farming bottom line and which effectively makes New South Wales farmers less competitive with overseas farmers.

**AC 08** That the Association promote the dangers in Australia moving into a position where it is necessary to import food.

**AC 00** That the Association continue to seek that the Federal Government manage the economy in such a way as to promote improved and sustained international competitiveness, in particular by preventing increases in the cost of production of Australia's major rural exports from exceeding those of our trading partners and competitors.

**AC 00** That the Association seek that the Government adopt a policy of incentives and other appropriate measures to assist rural communities and industries to adjust, remain in and become more competitive in world markets.

### National Economic Reform

## National Economic Reform

that:

- (a) legislative review processes give comprehensive recognition to the potential for deregulated markets to fail;
- (b) the Government ensures that sufficient resources are made available so that rural and regional Australia have equitable opportunities to fully participate in the review process; and
- (c) the Government recognises that the economic and social contribution of rural and regional Australia is fundamentally reliant on the ongoing provision of infrastructure and takes steps to ensure that equitable access is provided to infrastructure services at affordable prices

**AC 96** That the Association press the Federal Government to:

- (a) initiate appropriate measures to improve the current account deficit;
- (b) lower marginal tax rates;
- (c) develop an effective national savings policy with incentives to encourage private sector savings;
- (d) deregulate the labour market and pursue a more flexible approach to wage determination;

**AC 00 Reaffirmed** (e) abolish automatic indexation of government taxes and charges; and

- (f) where indexation continues to apply, then impose a cap on all government charges and expenditure programs of CPI minus 2 per cent to ensure continued pursuit of productivity improvements.

## Privatisation

The Association believes there are significant benefits available to Australia from the privatisation and deregulation of some government activities. Privatisation policy should:

- (a) increase competition and not simply create another monopoly (**AC 99**);
- (b) have demonstrated long term benefits beyond increasing Government revenue from sale of assets and/or maintaining excessive government expenditure (**AC 99**);
- (c) be made "case by case" and not on an "across the board" basis;
- (d) involve employees and small investors in ownership; and
- (e) ensure that the profitability of a previously publicly owned body was not guaranteed by government.

**AC 99** Accordingly, the Association:

- (a) seeks that Governments ensure that the privatisation of essential Government instrumentalities and community services, such as power, telephone, postal services, only be implemented with:
  - (i) the provision and establishment of alternative competitive services;
  - (ii) full prior public disclosure and approval; and
  - (iii) with specific attention to rural and remote consumer safeguard;
- (b) seeks that Government and owners of essential infrastructure assets for which a Community Service Obligation applies be required to provide a legislated universal standard of service, without discrimination on the basis of location.

## Crown Lands

### Perpetual Leases

**AC 04** That the Association lobby the State Government to allow the conversion to freehold of all perpetual leases in the Central and Eastern Divisions with no impediments or restrictions.

**04 Apr EC** That the Association seek to have "Unimproved Market Value" (as used in the Crown Lands press release) be the same as "Unimproved Capital Value" and that values of any conversions of perpetual lease, be based on the Valuer General's valuation at the time of the announcement, 1 April 2004.

**AC 05** That the Association lobby:

- (a) for the \$350 maximum per three year permit beyond 2007;
- (b) for any expenses relating to objections, valuations and surveying of Crown roads be met by the State Government;
- (c) for all roads held by a farming enterprise regardless of land title can be processed under the one set of transfer fees;
- (d) for the State Government to change legislation relating to road enclosure permits so that it can be administered in a similar manner to RLPB rates where the controlling business entity is the entity that receives the account instead of the "lessee";
- (e) for the State Government to waive any fees and gift enclosed roads of less than five hectares to the landholder;
- (f) for the Coalition to commit to reverting road enclosure permit fees to the original fee;
- (g) for the State Government to contribute towards the costs of fencing out Crown roads;
- (h) for the State Government to waive road enclosure permit fees where the Crown road is regularly used for access;
- (i) to ensure there are no increases in leasehold or permit rents while applications are pending;
- (j) that where road closure is prevented by the objection of a third party – not the property owner – then payment conversion to a public road should be at the cost of the person lodging the objection;

## Perpetual Leases

(k) the Association demand that as the Department of Lands already has information on paper regarding surveys of all roads, the property owners not be required to pay for further surveys;

(l) for further reduction in costs to convert small road enclosures.

**AC 05** That the Association request, that any road that a landholder commits to set aside for revegetation and conservation, be gifted to the landholder and that Catchment Management Authorities provide funding for fencing materials and regeneration of flora for these areas.

**05 Feb EC** That the Association reaffirm its support for a \$350 flat fee for three (3) years for Road Enclosure Permits held by an individual landholder and reject the schedule of permit fees issued to permit holders by the Department of Lands.

**04 Oct EC** That the Association on the issue of road enclosure permits:

(a) Examine how valuations will be determined for freeholding, and argue for the lowest unimproved capital value of the adjacent blocks to the enclosure permit or a district index for the valuation.

(b) Examine how applications for freeholding contiguous titles will be dealt with, and argue for the maximum flexibility and the lowest cost possible.

(c) Actively encourage members to freehold, given that the department of lands will only make the concessional offer to freehold valid for two years.

(d) Support a flat rate permit fee of \$350 that aligns with the three year periods between permit fee reviews.

(e) Propose to the Minister for Lands that there be an option for deferred freeholding on set terms.

## Road Enclosures

**07 Mar EC** That the Association request the government use the rateable value of the road enclosures at the time of the implementation of the road enclosures policy as the value to be used as the purchase price of such roads.

**AC 06** That the Association lobby the State government to:

a) have ownership of all enclosed roads transferred to the enclosure permit holder on the grounds of the lack of administration ability of the NSW Government in relation to road closures;

b) extend the time period to apply to convert perpetual leases; and

c) due to lack of administration personnel within the Lands Department that landholder's multiple permits be amalgamated for both ease of administration and consideration to the landholder.

## Economic Management

### Economic Management

**02 Feb EC** That the Association support the maintenance of a surplus budget by the Federal Government but within that constraint accept a slowing of the rate of the current debt reduction program provided this results in the improvement of national net worth from investment in infrastructure.

## Energy

### Electricity

**AC 06** That the Association oppose the compulsory introduction of 'time of use' metering via Smart Metre power supply in respect to rural domestic power.

**AC 98** That the Association believes that electricity supply is an essential service and must be maintained in an efficient manner and seeks:

(a) to ensure that power companies continue to deliver a standard of service that is in line with that provided to metropolitan customers, without undue increase in charges;

(b) to have all money and assets removed

from electricity county councils to state revenue returned to rightful owners (local communities)**97 May GC**;

(c) that the State Government cease extracting dividends from electricity suppliers;

(d) to ensure that electricity distributors retain responsibility for the maintenance of the connection of power to principal residence of a property and related equipment, including the power supply poles situated on private property **AC 97**;

(e) that the access charges to electricity networks be discounted for rural consumers;

(f) that where a second and subsequent power transformer exists on a property only one minimum charge apply **AC 99**; and

(g) that the State government oppose any transfer of responsibility of maintenance to electricity infrastructure from the electricity authorities to landholders**00 Oct GC**.

**EC 08** That the Association lobby the State and Federal Governments to ensure a competitive and reliable supply of energy (e.g. gas) be available to agricultural industries. CARRIED

### Electricity Tariff Equalisation Scheme

**AC 03** That the Association seek that the tariff equalisation scheme for electricity service provision be continued (due to end in 3 years).

## Power Lines

**AC 06** That the Association seek that energy providers ensure adequate ground inspection and replacement of their aging power line network to ensure reliable supply.

**AC 03** That the Association seeks:

- (a) an inquiry into change of ownership of, and responsibility for, power lines from transformer to private property and maintenance of same
- (b) that power line clearance over roads be increased in consideration of increasing transport height of farm equipment.

## Renewable Energy

**03 Oct EC** That the Association supports the concept of a domestic biofuel industry, and encourages the GCA and Federal Government to facilitate compliance of the oil producers in developing the domestic ethanol industry.

**AC 01** That the Association press the Federal Government to take more concerted action and make more funds available for research and development of alternative fuels.

**97 Oct GC** That the Association seek more Government support for renewable energy sources and the dissemination of information on renewable energy technology advances.

**AC 07** That the Association:

- a) seek incentives for farmers to invest in environmentally friendly power generation systems;
- b) lobby for biodiesel produced on farm, for on farm use, be excise free;
- c) oppose any introduction of excise on ethanol fuel; and
- d) seek an investigation into the differential pricing between auto gas and household gas.

**EC 08** That the Association, oppose the privatisation of the NSW retail electricity market, unless the following safeguards are agreed to:

- a) A standard electricity contract, made available to all customers in NSW, that contains an agreed universal standard of service and a maximum price determined by an independent regulator;
- b) Continuity of electricity supply for all customers;
- c) Assured infrastructure maintenance and development; and
- d) A continued assurance of price and service beyond 2013.

## Fair Trading

### Country of Origin Labelling

**04 EC** The Association support the following market power related regulatory obligations;

(a) secure the use of safeguard provisions and accurate and effective country of origin labelling on imports of agricultural products (subject to review by all commodity areas), and full Government liability for any associated pest and disease outbreaks where industry has credibly opposed importation on the grounds of unacceptable disease risk.

**AC 06** That the Association lobby the Federal government for truth in labelling on all food products so the consumer can make an informed decision.

**AC 05** That the Association lobby for all products sold in supermarkets to have the country of origin clearly marked on the packing and for all imported products to meet the same standards and health requirements as Australian goods.

**AC 98** That the Association:

- (a) pursue the implementation of a labelling system for all food products that allows the country of origin of its essential character to be easily determined by the consumer; and
- (b) encourage all relevant marketing organisations in Australia that use levy funds to give priority to encouraging purchase of Australian produce wherever competition from imports reduces the viability of local producers.

## Supermarkets

**05 EC** That the Association:

- (a) support the retention of a retail grocery industry code of conduct that provides appropriate protection for non-horticultural agricultural industries whose produce is sold through the retail grocery supply chain, including the provision of an effective dispute resolution procedure; and
- (b) in the event that such an omnibus code cannot be secured, the Association promote the use by vulnerable agricultural industries of industry-specific codes of conduct, and assist with their development and implementation.

**04 EC** The Association support the following market power related regulatory obligations;

- (a) Proposed amendment of the Trade Practices Act to expand the definition of unconscionable conduct to include unilateral contract variation and commercial retaliation and allow a notification process for collective bargaining with a right to boycott.
- (b) improve price transparency in agricultural markets by Codes of Conduct or legislation.

The Association establish and maintain a continuing dialogue with the large corporate buyers to encourage improved corporate conduct and practices; where this fails, expose corporate misconduct in the media; create

## Supermarkets

alliances with other small business groups, and take direct action on behalf of farmers in cases of extreme abuses of market power.

The Association support, subject to cost benefit analysis, the following market power related commercial facilitation opportunities;

- (a) negotiate low-cost training by service providers for members in QA, farm chemical safety and OH&S.
- (b) improve farmers' skills through training, using external expertise, in areas such as legal appreciation, business, marketing, export facilitation and Government funding to improve supply performance
- (c) promote and provide training, facilitation and assistance in collective negotiation through the Trade Practices Act authorisation process.
- (d) profile innovative and successful farmers to develop a check list of means by which farm profitability might be improved.
- (e) develop and promote accreditation of members who meet certain performance criteria relating to the supply of safe, good quality produce.
- (f) provide template or model contracts to members negotiating with supermarkets and/or intermediaries.
- (g) negotiate with, and promote 'preferred businesses' that offer such advantages as discounts for production inputs, higher supply prices, use of Association-approved contracts, and preference in supply arrangements.

**AC 04** That the Association:

- (a) supports changes to the Trade Practices Act that more clearly defines "unconscionable conduct" and includes reference to "unfair conduct";
- (b) pursues a legally binding Retail Code of Conduct;
- (c) seeks better price transparency, including through legislation.

**AC 04** That the Association support the market power initiative and explore implementation in other agricultural industries.

**03 Sep EC** That in respect to the Retail Grocery Industry Code of Conduct, the Association seeks a voluntary Code under the Trade Practices Act 1974, with an attached condition that if such a voluntary Code cannot be agreed within twelve months the Government should mandate the Code.

**AC 99** That the Association continue to make urgent representation to the Federal Government to address the unfair trading conditions that have been identified in the agricultural industries.

**AC 03** That the Association call for an inquiry to investigate the widening gap between the cost of food to consumers and the price received at the farm gate.

**AC 06** That the Association conduct an inquiry to investigate the operation of the large supermarket chains putting downward pressure on prices of primary produce from large suppliers, forcing smaller producers out of business.

**99 Apr GC** That in relation to the increasing dominance of a small number of supermarkets in food retailing in Australia, the Association:

- (a) acknowledge the growing concerns of members in specific industries about the increasing potential for the use of unfair trading practices by major supermarket chains;
- (b) acknowledges the potential that major supermarket chains have to deliver efficiency and innovation in food retailing, to the benefit of producer and consumer;
- (c) not support the imposition of statutory limits to market share in food retailing at this time, but review this position in the event that satisfactory alternative measures are not implemented;
- (d) seek amendments to part 4a of the Trade Practices Act to;
- (i) Create a Fair Trading Authority which has powers including; the ability to identify markets 'vulnerable' to unfair trading; to facilitate the development of Codes of Practice for those markets; to impose and enforce information disclosure requirements on participants in those markets; to publish or provide information that assists in preventing unfair trading practices developing; and to recommend summary penalties for market participants using unfair trading practices.
- (ii) Create a Fair Trading Tribunal that has powers to impose summary penalties on participants in 'vulnerable' markets on reference from the Fair Trading Authority, and also acts as an appeal tribunal for market participants that are subject to penalty.
- (e) seeks the implementation of programs at a Commonwealth and State level that assists farmers in establishing trading groups, and provides them with incentives to develop business and marketing skills to better match those of the major Supermarket chains.

## Foreign Investment

### Foreign Investment

**AC 08** That New South Wales Farmers' Association urgently requests that the Federal Government, and the Australian Foreign Investment Review Board, limits foreign investment in Australia's strategic industries and primary commodity reserves to secondary positions behind controlling Australian interests.

The Association believes there should be :

- (a) support for the right of foreign interests to participate in equity ventures in Australian agriculture;
- (b) safeguards in place, through the trade practices legislation, to guard against harmful monopolistic control of any part of the production or marketing chain;

## Foreign Investment

- (c) similar access available for Australians trading internationally or participating in foreign projects; and
- (d) restrictions on future foreign investment in land in Australia so that such investment is restricted to leasehold where appropriate, with suitable restrictions or controls where possible.

**AC 98** That the Association oppose the adoption of the Multi-lateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) until there is overwhelming authenticated evidence that this treaty will be of benefit to all Australians and that national sovereignty and domestic trading freedom will not be affected if it is implemented.

**AC 97** That the Association:

- (a) urges the Minister for Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries in Australia to inquire into:
  - (i) the effects of foreign ownership and vertical integration in agriculture on farm viability;
  - (ii) to investigate the tax paid and dividend repatriation by foreign companies;
- (b) seeks that foreign investment in Australia be taxed at the same rate as domestic taxation and that every effort be made to reduce and eliminate transfer pricing in both goods and services;
- (c) urges the Federal and State Governments to upgrade the data base on foreign investment and foreign ownership registers, so as to allow informed debate on foreign investment in Australia; and

**97 Oct GC** (d) calls for a review of the Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB) with reference to its decisions on foreign ownership of rural land, residential and commercial land and business and that an adversary committee to the FIRB be formed.

**96 Oct GC** That the Association seek a commitment from NFF to pursue reciprocal rights in respect of investment in infrastructure in the countries of our trading partners.

## Fuel Prices

### Benchmarking

**AC 06** That the Association investigate the Federal Government's basis for fuel pricing policies with a view to lobbying for benchmarking pump prices against a basket of world prices not just Singapore.

### Country Fuel Prices

**AC 08** That the Association lobby the Governments to address the high price of fuel, especially diesel and its ever increasing premium to petrol, and particularly looking at associated taxes and the pegging to the Singapore Benchmark.

**AC 08** That the Association seek that an inquiry into Diesel fuel pricing in Rural areas be held.

**AC 96** That the Association continue to take action to reduce or abolish the pricing inequities that exist between capital city and country fuel prices.

**AC 95** That the Association actively seek the removal of restrictive and anti-competitive practices affecting fuel prices.

## Fuel supply

### Alternative Fuels

**EC 08** That the NSW Farmers' Association does not support mandatory percentage targets of biofuels in liquid fuel.

**AC 06** That the Association lobby the government:

- a) to mandate alternate fuels be available;
- b) to encourage the development of biodiesel products by way of tax concessions and other incentives;
- c) to establish a biofuels CRC to research the development of biofuel specific crops to maximise yield potential and fuel production efficiency
- d) rationalise legislation to allow biodiesel produced for your own off-road use to be exempt from the payment and rebate of excise.

### Biodiesel Production

**06 Mar EC** That the Association lobby government to remove legislative impediments that restrict the "on farm" production and use of biofuels.

**AC 05** That the Association lobby the Federal Government for more support for the establishment of biodiesel fuel production.

**05 Feb EC** That the Association/Fuel Price Taskforce, cause a study into the feasibility of farm scale biodiesel fuel production, including:

- (a) potential opportunities;
- (b) present constraints;
- (c) research and development required to achieve practical, viable farm scale biodiesel production; and
- (d) recommendations for further action.

## Biodiesel Production

**05 Feb EC** That the Association/Fuel Price Taskforce investigate the viability of commercial scale biodiesel fuel production.

## Leaded fuel

**95 Oct GC** That the Association seek to have leaded fuel available indefinitely.

## Port Access

**05 Feb EC** That the Association/NFF lobby the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to:

- (a) ensure adequate port access and facilities are available for use by independent fuel suppliers;
- (b) monitor the pricing of fuel and take action to stop collusion in setting fuel prices; and
- (c) take action to maximise open competition in the fuel marketplace.

## International trade

### Anti dumping

**AC 99** Reaffirmed That the Association:

(a) support countervailing action for industries threatened by subsidised imports where those industries would otherwise be efficient users of Australia's resources; and

**AC 98** (b) continue to work for more effective anti-dumping and countervailing legislation, including interim action while a case is considered.

### Multilateral and Bilateral Trade Negotiations

**00 Oct EC** That the Association continue to support the pursuit of multi-lateral trade agreements and encourage that additional Government resources be allocated to the pursuit of potential regional trading agreements, as long as resources are not diverted from multi-lateral efforts.

**AC 99** That the Association seek that Australia's negotiating position for the next round of World Trade Organisation negotiations be governed by the following principles:

(a) at all times seek enhanced access for Australian farm produce to international food and fibre markets;

(b) agricultural export subsidies and production related domestic market subsidies should be eliminated;

(c) effective countervailing action for those industries threatened by subsidised imports where those industries would otherwise be efficient users of Australian resources and to establish effective country of origin labelling laws;

(d) support appropriate measures that assist rural communities and industries that must adjust to become competitive in world markets; and

(e) no treaty should be ratified until agreement is reached on agriculture.

**AC 98** That the Association urge the Federal Government to seek that World Trade Organisation negotiations be comprehensive and multi-sectoral to:

(a) ensure that trade in agricultural products is subject to the full framework of fair trading rules, including:

(i) unrestricted access to markets (**AC 99**);

(ii) the elimination of export subsidies (**AC 99**);

(iii) the elimination of foreign domestic subsidies that are production related and that remaining support mechanisms minimise market distortions (**AC 99**);

(iv) the adoption of effective internal Competition Policies by WTO signatories; and

(v) no trade-off of one Australian primary industry against another in order to obtain market access to an export market.

### Non Tariff Measures

**AC 03** That the Association seek:

(a) to protect Australia's scientifically founded sanitary and phyto-sanitary protection measures in any bilateral or multilateral trade agreement negotiation.

(b) to protect existing state marketing entities in any bilateral or multilateral trade agreement negotiation.

### Overseas Aid

**AC 99** That the Association seek that the Federal Government give overseas aid in the form of locally grown and/or manufactured primary products in lieu of cash.

### Tariffs

That the Association:

**AC 90** (a) demand Government remove all tariffs from imported agricultural machinery spare parts;

**AC 96** (b) oppose the Federal Government's decision to remove the Tariff Concession Scheme as it relates to imported goods and machinery not manufactured in Australia;

**AC 97** (c) press for continuation of the planned reduction of tariffs in the car industry.

## Trade Policy

**04 Feb EC** That the Association request the National Farmers' Federation to seek a major increase from the Commonwealth Government in resources and effort committed to the Cairns Group and to progressing the agriculture chapter of the Doha Round of World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations as this will deliver more benefits to Australian farmers than the limited outcomes of the US Trade Agreement.

**03 Apr EC** That the Association opposes the pork commodity and any other Australian agricultural product being used as a trade off in any free trade agreement negotiations between Australia and the United States of America or any other country.

**AC 00** Actively lobby the Federal Government to take action against the US Farm Bill and similar foreign farm subsidies through the WTO.

The Association seeks that the Federal Government should pursue trade and industry policies on the following basis:

- (a) national interest should be the objective of Australia's trade and industry policies;
- (b) the Government should refocus programmes of protection and assistance reform to ensure the same principles apply universally to all industries and those with the highest levels of protection should have that protection reduced fastest;
- (c) Assistance reductions should be undertaken in conjunction with fiscal policies aimed at high economic growth;
- (d) Reductions in Australia's protection should be traded for improved access to Australia's export markets; and
- (e) Unilateral reductions in assistance represent a viable policy option and should be pursued if other countries are unwilling to reduce their protection.

**EC 08** That the Association lobby the Federal Government to support the Australian Pork Industry by:

- a) Identifying trade distortions created by imported pork and its products and apply WTO trade rules to these;
- b) Introduce a strict requirement for country of origin labelling for pork to include date of manufacture for all imported and domestic product; and
- c) Reassessing the recommendations from the Productivity Commission reports. CARRIED Unanimously

That the Association strongly oppose the subsidization of the importation of primary produce.

## Trade sanctions

**AC 01** The Association seeks legislation to ensure the payment of just compensation by the Federal Government to any sector of the community that is affected by:

- (a) trade sanctions imposed against a foreign country; or
- (b) an international agreement to which the Government is a signatory.

## Local Government

### Amalgamations

**AC 03** That the Association demands that the NSW Government cease the current initiatives in relation to the amalgamation of shires until the Government:

- (a) reveals its vision for the future of local governments in rural communities;
- (b) commits to a process that no amalgamation occurs without the majority support of the communities affected;
- (c) undertakes a full public cost benefit analysis on the local communities of changing shire boundaries.

### Land valuation

**AC 00** That the Association seek that the Valuer General ensure that pastoral and agricultural lands are not valued at the same value as horticultural lands.

**00 Feb GC** That Association seeks that when the NSW Government Valuer General's Office revises Land Valuations it takes into account the severe devaluation of unimproved land that has occurred since the imposition of the Native Vegetation Conservation Act.

That the Association seek an amendment to the Valuation of Land Act to provide an appeals mechanism to enable obvious

inconsistencies in valuations within districts to be corrected where lands of similar classification which are adjoining or

reasonably adjacent have a valuation difference of more than 10 per cent.

**99 Feb GC** That the Association vigorously lobby the Valuer General's Department to have water licence values exempted from consideration when valuing rural properties.

### Local Government Investments

**EC 08** That the Association lobbies the State Government to introduce legislation limiting local government councils to only invest reserves in AAA Rated Australian government securities.

### Local government Rates

**AC 08** To implement consistent and uniform conditions with respect to conditional registration and movement of local government road making and maintenance equipment.

**AC 08** That the Association strongly condemn the charging of exorbitant penalty interest rates by the New South

## Local government Rates

Wales Government Departments and lobby to have them reduced to market rates.

**AC 04** That the Association urge the Minister for Local Government to reject a rural council's request for exemption from rate pegging where that council's rate structure is unfair to its farm sector.

**00 Feb GC** That the Association seek a formula for the rating of farms, which takes into account the disadvantage they suffer in the provision of local government services.

## Services and revenue raising

That the Association seek autonomy for local government in relation to local matters. In the case of revenue raising and expenditure practices:

- (a) the State Government should rigorously pursue the adoption of user pays in Local Government. The Government should provide legislation which ensures that the move to user pays is revenue neutral (ie. it must be a saving to ratepayers);
- (b) there should be a just and equitable share of Commonwealth government revenue equal to 3 per cent of income tax receipts;
- (c) local government administration should concentrate on the provision of traditional services such as local roads, construction and maintenance;
- (d) Land Boards must notify Local Government when permission is given to fence across a road;
- (e) penalty rates and holiday loadings should be abolished and a return made to a 40 hour week;
- (f) both state and federal governments must firmly establish priorities for local government funding so that local governments can plan for longer term commitments in implementing programmes that are primarily state and federal government initiatives;
- (g) that the base charge concept be adopted on the basis that the charge be not less than 30 percent and that the government investigate the advisability of extending the base charge concept to include commercial and mining ratepayers;
- (h) there should be a policy of pegging local government rate increases;
- (i) the State Government should request all local government councils to forward with each rate notice details of income and expenditure, and assets and liabilities for the previous year, together with the budget for the year for which the rates are levied;
- (j) Councils should be given the capability to employ all staff on a contract basis and employ all staff on merit;
- (k) the Association support the proposal by the Minister for Local Government that "equal value first-past-the-post" voting be adopted for Local Government elections;
- (l) the Local Government Act be amended to provide that anyone being a ratepayer to a Council be automatically enrolled on the electoral roll for that Council;
- (m) oppose any forced amalgamations of Shire Councils;
- (n) the amount of Commonwealth and State taxation monies to be returned to local government as grant monies should be increased;
- (o) local government accounting should be standardised and the various functions of councils should be presented preferably on a per capita basis for easy comparison;
- (p) local government should be obliged, on the request of interested parties, to supply copies of their estimates for the ensuing year;
- (q) the rating of a small area of land in one Shire which adjoins a principal area of land in an adjoining Shire should be dealt with on an ad valorem basis, where there is common ownership of both areas of land.

## Rail Transport

### Rail Infrastructure

**AC 08** That the Association lobby State and Federal Governments that agricultural freight be made a priority on the rail network and at ports.

**01 Oct EC** Urge the NSW Government to commit a significant portion of the proceeds of the sale of FreightCorp to upgrading rail freight infrastructure in rural New South Wales, without any increase in line access fees.

**AC 00** That the Association seeks that:

- (a) increased State and Federal Government funding and action to upgrade rail infrastructure to improve rail's contribution to the development of an integrated, reliable, efficient inland-based transport system to enable Australia to competitively market goods internationally;
- (b) the State rail system be operated in a commercially efficient manner and any element of subsidy to either city or rural services be clearly identified and funded from the State budget;
- (c) the State and Federal Governments maintain the western rail line through Broken Hill to Perth as an interstate transport link for Central and Western NSW, as well as capital cities **AC 94 R**;
- (d) the inland rail proposal (Brisbane, Goondiwindi, Tocumwal Melbourne) be supported, but refrain for supporting any specific location within the Brisbane Goondiwindi Tocumwal Melbourne route proposed for the Australian Inland Rail Expressway **00 May GC**; and

## Rail Infrastructure

(e) the proposed rail link between NSW and Queensland be strongly supported **AC 96**.

**00 Oct GC** The Association believes that reforms are necessary to achieve the most efficient least cost and competitive handling, transport and shipping system possible.

**AC 04** That the Association support the Australian Government taking over the Northern Tablelands Standard Gauge Rail Line into Southern Queensland with a view to establishing viable freight and passenger links.

**AC 07** That the Association:

a) press both NSW and Federal Government to commence negotiating on the supply of infrastructure and transport with emphasis on the following:

i ) lack of competition in the supply of rail freight services, grain handling facilities, and port facilities;  
ii) seek investment in rail infrastructure, including construction of inland rail route and maintenance and upgrading of existing branch assets;

iii) seek investment in the inland road network; and

b) seek that suspended rail lines be either maintained or officially abandoned to allow local government to adequately address their infrastructure program with the authority responsible for abandonment to assume the cost of replacement of alternate infrastructure.

## Rail Safety

**AC 08** That the Association lobby the NSW and Federal Governments to compel all road and rail transport of coal to be covered to avoid dust and aggregate pollution during transit.

**AC 94** That the Association request State Rail to:

(a) put reflective material on the sides of goods railwagons;

(b) put flashing lights on major country rail crossings with "prepare to stop lights" 500 metres before the crossing;  
and

(c) put flashing lights on locomotives.

## Regional Development

### ABS Agricultural Census

**97 Oct GC** That the Association seeks Federal, or alternatively NSW State, funding to ensure that the Agricultural Census continues annually in NSW.

### Commonwealth Grants

**00 Feb GC** That the Association seek that the State Government distribute Federal Grants to local governments if they have met the requirements of the National Competition Policy, recognising that such grants must provide stimulus to local economies.

## Regional Development

**AC 95** That the Association endorse and support effective decentralisation policies and the removal of impediments fundamental to the encouragement of regional and rural development including:

**AC 01** (a) That the Association give support to exploring the concept of zonal taxation subject to there being no trade-off of existing primary producer specific taxation measures;

**AC 94** (b) Reduced taxation on road users;

(c) Improved quality and efficiency of the transport networks;

(d) Flexible working arrangements which allow businesses in rural areas to share with their employees the benefits of cheaper country living;

(e) Improved and more cost effective telecommunications links.

## Regional Strategic Plans

**99 Feb GC** That the Association assess community initiatives to develop regional strategic plans for NSW through active participation as appropriate by regional representatives nominated by Executive Council and co-ordinated by the BEAT Committee.

## Tourism

**96 Oct GC** That the Association encourage the eco-tourism industry.

## Work for the dole

**AC 98** That the Association urge the Federal Government to institute a tree planting scheme along the lines of the 'green corps' initiative, as part of the 'work for the dole' scheme.

# Road transport

## Agricultural Vehicle Registration

**AC 06** That the Association lobby the NSW Roads and Transport Ministers to:

- a) remove the impractical and excessive restrictions on the transport and registration of all farm machinery;
- b) register rubber tracked agricultural tractors under the same conditions as agricultural rubber tyred tractors;
- c) have regulations interpreted on a more regional basis to accommodate the nature of rural activities; and
- d) place more of the onus back on road users via education programmes and regionally relevant road signage within agricultural areas of NSW.

**AC 05** That the Association ask the Government to consider exemptions for primary producers to the proposal by the NSW Government to impose higher vehicle registration fees on vehicles with larger capacity engines, to allow primary producers to continue using their essential vehicles.

**AC 05** That the Association lobby the RTA to relax restrictions on the movement of oversize machinery:

- (a) after dark, provided there is adequate lighting; and
- (b) on public holidays.

**AC 04** That the Association seek the RTA to provide a list of heavy vehicle requirements needed when registering all types of farm trucks, and this to be supplied to all primary producer truck owners.

**AC 97** That the Association further pursue the issue of heavy vehicle registration through:

- (a) urging the NSW Government to ensure that primary producers pay no more for registration of heavy road vehicles than in 1995/96, at least until the introduction of a national distance based charge which recognises the low distances travelled by primary producer heavy vehicles;

**97 Oct GC** (b) requesting the NSW Government and the

National Road Transport Corporation to allow the use of flexible signage for oversized vehicles travelling on public roads; and

**AC 98** (c) seeking that farm trucks registered for an initial three month period can be re-registered for three additional one month periods during the remainder of the twelve month period without requiring a further road-worthy inspection.

## B-Double and Road Train Access

**AC 99** The Association seek that:

- (a) "B"doubles and Road Trains be given access to all suitable roads in all shires in NSW;
- (b) funding to upgrade necessary roads that are not suitable.

## Buses

The Association seeks:

- (a) the introduction of seat belts on all new buses, and especially on school buses; and
- (b) the abolition of the mandatory age limit restriction for buses so that usage will depend on the vehicles' general condition as determined by twice yearly inspection.

## Cattle Grids

**00 Oct GC** That the Association seek that the road authority that requires a landowner to construct or retain stock grids and approaches on roads other than those for private use, be responsible for the maintenance of that stock grid and approach.

## compliance and Enforcement

**04 Apr EC** That the Association:

- (a) Lobby for amendments to the NSW version of the NTC 'The Road Transport (Compliance and Enforcement) Bill' so that it is consistent with other states; and
- (b) Seek that a parliamentary committee be set up to investigate volumetric loading of livestock and a harvest loading scheme for grain to increase flexibility in mass limits.

## Drivers Licences

**AC 08** That the Association objectively oppose arbitrary changes of age limits for elderly drivers of 75 and over so that ability is considered rather than age.

**03 Feb EC** That the Association seek the removal of new charges which have been imposed on anybody seeking a driver's licence.

**AC 95** That the Association seek to have the Government amend the law so that:

- (a) a person driving a motor vehicle be allowed a period of 24 hours to produce their licence to the nearest police

## Drivers Licences

station if stopped by the police; and

(b) it is not compulsory for primary producers to carry their drivers licence when driving a vehicle within 30kms of their property and that it be sufficient to quote their driver's licence number.

## Farm Vehicle Permits

**AC 04** That the Association pursue a policy of a single conditional registration covering all nominated agricultural implements on a farm.

**AC 04** That the Association seek the Minister for Transport to allow exemptions from RTA Regulations regarding:

(a) the fitting of brake and indicator lights on tractors purchased prior to 1994;

(b) the fitting of brake lights on existing headers prior to the government's development of new importation standards for machinery;

(c) existing grain bins with rollover tarps exceeding 2.5 metres in width from being modified and that any new bins manufactured comply with the 2.5 metres width;

(d) the movement of oversize machinery on public holidays.

**AC 03** That the Association seek that the RTA allow all terrain vehicles, headers, ag-bikes and pre-1994 tractors to be exempt from the conditional registration requirement to fit rear vision mirrors, horn, rear reflectors and brake and turn lights.

**AC 02** That the Association lobby for an RTA permit system to allow previously registered vehicles to be used, with permit, on-farm and intermittently on public roads without jeopardising public risk or workers compensation insurance.

**AC 02** That the Association seek that all unregistered farm vehicles owned by one farm enterprise be covered by one third party insurance policy and one conditional registration.

**02 May EC** That as a matter of urgency the Association seek a solution to the problem of "paddock bashers" and tractors not being able to be insured on private property.

**AC 00 Reaffirmed** That the Association:

(a) continue to seek a simpler and cheaper permit system for unregistered farm vehicles;

(b) seek the ability to cancel these permits and receive a pro rata credit for the unused period;

(c) seek a review of the RTA requirement for

flashing lights, rear vision mirrors, turn indicators and brake lights to be fitted to tractors before permits are issued

**AC 95**; and

(d) that the Association peruse the duplication of process in relation to privately owned dedicated fire-fighting equipment**01 Feb GC**.

## Heavy Vehicle Safety

**AC 02** That the Association approach the RTA to:

(a) amend RTA action on recapped truck tyres previously passed for registration;

(b) allow primary producer registered vehicles to be able to carry their Gross Vehicle Mass irrespective of individual axle weights;

(c) Allow annual inspections by local inspectors of primary producer trucks, classified as heavy vehicles;

(d) "Allow Pink Slips that have been issued for quarterly registered farm trucks to be accepted for unregistered vehicle permits."

That the Association seek:

(a) that speed limits for heavy vehicles be set according to the quality of individual stretches of road;

(b) the introduction of speed limiting devices to articulated vehicles;

(c) increased penalties for heavy vehicles using excessive speed;

(d) increased road funding, particularly in 'black spots'; and

(e) that the State Government oppose proposals to ban "Bull Bars" on vehicles **AC 94**.

## Livestock Loading

**93 AC** That the Association seek adoption of volumetric loading of livestock trucks in NSW.

**AC 05** That the Association lobby for:

(a) the onus be taken off farmers for the responsibility for loads of grain and livestock on trucks leaving their property;

(b) the introduction of a livestock loading scheme in NSW; and

(c) wider tolerances on load weight limits.

## Livestock Loading

**05 Feb EC** That the Association lobby for the introduction of a deck area livestock loading scheme based on a consideration of gross vehicle mass, subject to further consultation with livestock transporters.

**AC 04** That the Association support the transport industry's push for volumetric loading as opposed to weight loading in the livestock industry.

## Oversize Overmass Regulations

**96 Oct GC** That the Association further pursue:

- (a) changes in carrying capacity (legal load limits);
- (b) dog trailers being allowed bogey x bogey on rigid bogey drive trucks, which should give a load of 34 tonnes**94 Oct GC**;
- (c) tri-axles being allowed 8 tonnes per axle when loaded**94 Oct GC**; and
- (d) the introduction of "Livestock Loading" in NSW**98 Feb GC Reaffirmed**.

## Road Access

That the Association seek to have the "due process" of gazetting of Local Government roads by councils for B double and Road train routes more transparent and without interference from the Roads and Traffic Authority.

## Road Building Practices

**AC 08** To implement consistent and uniform conditions with respect to conditional registration and movement of local government road making and maintenance equipment.

That the Association seek that:

- (a) the Roads and Traffic Authority and Shire Councils should update work practices and methods of construction of roads and bridges;
- (b) public tenders should be called for all road improvement works; and

**97 Oct GC** (c) the RTA should review the design standards and specifications for all country roundabouts.

**AC 04** That the Association:

- (a) investigate compensation from local government for misaligned public roads on private land;
- (b) seek an amendment to the Roads Act in relation to a broad resolution of issues of council public roads on privately owned land;
- (c) seek blanket indemnity from local government in respect of liability arising from the location of a public road on private land;
- (d) Seek to ensure that any road on private land used and maintained as a public road by council cannot be closed until an alternate road suitable for cars is made available.

## Road Funding

**AC 05** That the Association lobby to have:

- (a) extra funds allocated to rural councils for maintenance and upkeep of rural roads; and
- (b) this funding for shire rural roads conditional of transparency and accountability of disbursement of these funds.

**04 Oct EC** That the Association forge an alliance with the NRMA to lobby for improved road and infrastructure funding in rural NSW.

**AC 04** That the Association seek local, state and federal governments to provide a more equitable share of the road funding "cake", and ensure a continuation and expansion of "roads to recovery" programme and not "roads to potholes".

**AC 04** That the Association seek to have the NSW Government restore the \$300million funding for the Timber Bridge Replacement Programme.

**AC 04** That the Association make representations to the Federal Minister for Transport requesting the reinstatement of the Commonwealth Aid Roads grants to allow more rural roads to be bituminised

**AC 03** That the Association seek that the State Government provide further funding both to the RTA and local government authorities to repair roadways especially those damaged due to the drought.

**01 May GC** That the expenditure under the Federal Governments "Roads to Recovery" Program be clearly identified and advised at a local level.

**93 Oct GC** That the Association request Federal and State Governments to:

- AC 00** (a) make sufficient money available to address the deplorable state of rural roads;
- (b) commission the ARRB Transport Research to undertake a study of road design and construction with a view to recommending cost effective standards, taking into account capital cost versus maintenance costs;
- (c) change funding programs so that roads are brought up to these standards progressively over the next 5 years;
- (d) LP gas automotive vehicles pay a contribution to road maintenance and construction which is in line with that paid by other vehicles; and

**AC 00** (e) fund the replacement of the approximately 874 timber bridges on classified roads in NSW within the next

## Road Funding

10 years.

## Road Safety

**03 AC** That the Association ask the RTA to treat as urgent a change and upgrade of permanent NSW stock and agricultural road crossing signs.

**96 Oct GC** That the Association:

- (a) request that the Roads and Traffic Authority include in its publications for drivers and potential drivers a section on rural area driving hazards;
  - (b) support the use of signs warning road users of the presence of stock when stock are being walked, or are grazing along a public road;
  - (c) support the use of permanent signs for regularly used crossing to alleviate personal and manpower problems;
  - (d) seek that the RTA should approve the erection of permanent signs and determine who pays costs;
  - (e) support proposed legislation to make the display of all stock warning signs voluntary;
  - (f) seek that stock owners be responsible for the purchase of temporary signs;
  - (g) support the placement of stock warning signs at the start of sections of unfenced roads stating the distance in kilometres of the section;
  - (h) support the use of a composite sign to cover all classes of stock; and
  - (i) request the RTA to review the livestock signage requirements and adequately explain the legal obligations of both motorists and livestock owners
- 97 Oct GC.**

## Third Party Insurance

**AC 03** That the Association seek that the State Government have third party property insurance mandatory for all registered vehicles.

**AC 02** That the Association look at having third party property insurance compulsory on all motor vehicles.

**AC 94** That the Association require that insurance firms offering CTP and comprehensive cover be required to pay all reasonable claims arising from vehicle accidents caused by failure of components in vehicle signalling equipment such as brake lights and blinkers.

## Vehicle Defect Notices

The Association press the RTA to only issue defect notices requiring immediate removal off the road for mechanical defects constituting a road hazard, and not for minor defects.

## Vehicle Inspection

**AC 04** That the Association oppose re-caps on the steer axles of any vehicles, particularly school buses.

**AC 04** That the Association seek the RTA be the only authority to do on road side checking of trucks and heavy vehicles.

**AC 02** That the Association approach the RTA to:

- (a) amend RTA action on recapped truck tyres previously passed for registration;
- (b) allow primary producer registered vehicles to be able to carry their Gross Vehicle Mass irrespective of individual axle weights;
- (c) Allow annual inspections by local inspectors of primary producer trucks, classified as heavy vehicles;
- (d) "Allow Pink Slips that have been issued for quarterly registered farm trucks to be accepted for unregistered vehicle permits."

**93 Oct GC** The Association seek that:

- (a) all new goods-carrying vehicles, including one tonne tray trucks, under primary producer registration be exempt from roadworthy inspection for three years in line with the present standard for cars; and
  - (b) there be a 50% reduction in the RTA inspection charge for trucks registered by primary producers
- 97 Oct GC.**

**AC 08** That the Association lobby to have trucks when weighed by axle groups be allowed a 10% tolerance to allow for load shifting.

## Sea Transport

### Shipping

The Association believes that in order to enhance shipping efficiency:

- (a) existing freight tariffs should be simplified;
- (b) the land and sea freight leg components should be separated;
- (c) the sea leg should be expressed on a pan-Australia basis;
- (d) the Coastal Navigation Act should be repealed;

## Shipping

- (e) there should be efficient port services and internationally competitive charges;
- (f) the recommendations of the IAC report on coastal shipping should be implemented; and
- (g) that Trans Tasman shipping be open to all competition.

## Taxation

### Business Activity Statement

**01 Feb** That the Association lobby for the tax system to be changed so that business has 42 days to do returns.

### Business taxation

**AC 03** That the Association seeks indexation of the \$5 million asset limit for capital gains tax small business concessions.

**02 Feb EC** Request that the definition of small business under the Simplified Tax System (STS) provisions be modified to that of a small proprietary company under Section 9 of the Corporations Law, which includes any company that satisfies at least two of the following criteria:

- (a) annual turnover less than \$10 million;
- (b) gross assets less than \$5 million;
- (c) fewer than 50 employees;
- (d) eligibility for STS be extended to taxpayers who operate on a non-cash basis and also meet the other eligibility criteria.

**02 Feb EC** Eligibility for STS to be extended to taxpayers who operate on a non-cash basis and also meet the other eligibility criteria.

**00 Dec EC** That the Association rejects absolutely the Government's proposal to impose the Entities Taxation measures on non-fixed trusts.

**AC 00** That the Association:

- (a) reject strongly the "profits first" taxation rule for closely held entities;
- (b) urge the Federal and State Governments to provide transitional relief from taxes, such as capital gains tax and stamp duty, to enable all small business to restructure without penalty existing business structures in preparation for the introduction of entities taxation.

That the Association seek that:

- (a) the Treasurer give the Tax Commissioner discretion to allow losses to be off-set against other income in the year in which the loss is incurred provided that the deductions were of 'commercial purpose or character' and to instruct the Tax Commissioner to interpret 'commercial purpose or character of the transactions' broadly; and
- (b) the period in which activity must result in taxable income be reduced from three (3) to two (2) years out of five (5) years (**AC 00**).

**AC 99** That the Association oppose the removal of accelerated depreciation and the other adverse trade-offs for primary producers and small businesses embodied in the "Review of Business Taxation" and the Federal Government's response.

### Capital Gains Tax

**AC 05** That the Association lobby the Federal Government to abolish any capital gains tax applying to vendors on intergenerational transfers.

**AC 96** That the Association seek exemption from Capital Gains Tax for intergenerational transfer of farms.

### Deductions

**AC 05** That the Association lobby the Federal Government to allow immediate deduction for expenditure incurred on Occupational Health & Safety improvements where expenditure is of a capital nature rather than a repairs, maintenance nature.

### Drought Mitigation

**AC 07** That the Association lobby the Federal and State Governments for tax relief, specifically:

- a) restore accelerated depreciation for on farm improvements;
- b) reinstate investment allowances;
- c) reinstate tax incentives;
- d) Accelerated depreciation at year 1 20%, year 2 40%, year 3 40%, to a total claimable depreciation of 100% of the capital value of all grain, fodder, and water storage structures so that farmers can effectively drought proof their

## Drought Mitigation

farms;

e) grant access to Farm Management Deposit type products for small business and independent contractors that currently meet Exceptional Circumstances assistance criteria;

f) to allow Farm Management Deposits to be invested in a similar system as superannuation funds and not just cash; and

g) lobby the State Government to abolish stamp duty on purchases and mortgages as promised in 2000 (with the introduction of the GST).

## Farm Management Deposits

**08 AC** That the Association vehemently defends the Farm Management Deposit Scheme to allow all farmers to actively manage their highly variable income.

The Association seeks that:

**94 GC** (a) the tax treatment of FMDs be aligned with superannuation tax provisions; and

**01 GC** (b) the present requirement that FMDs must be withdrawn and taxed in the year of death or retirement from primary production be amended in respect of depositors and/or their estates to enable as a first priority withdrawal over any period up to five years after death or retirement from primary production and additionally to enable roll-over subject to 15 per cent tax into an approved superannuation roll-over fund (ADFs) and/or an approved superannuation or annuity fund if over 55.

**02 EC** That the Association seek that early access to Farm Management Deposits be available to those farmers affected by hardships, such as drought, without forfeiting taxation benefits.

**AC 03** That the Association seek regulatory changes to allow farmers to place their Farm Management Deposits with more than one financial institution.

## Fringe Benefits Tax

**AC 96** That the Association push for:

(a) the Fringe Benefits Tax to be abolished in regional areas; and

(b) the taxing of fringe benefits in the hands of the recipient **AC 95**.

## Fuel taxes

The Association seeks that:

(a) road user charges should not be used as general revenue taxes;

(b) road user charges should be more related to road damage caused by individual vehicle types, loads carried and distance travelled, and in relation to registration the charge should be distance based and primary producer vehicles should have an exemption for distance travelled off roads **97 Oct GC Reaffirmed**;

(c) road users should have greater representation on road construction and maintenance authorities; and

(d) a greater share of Federal fuel taxes should be used for the rural road network.

The Association seeks that both State and Federal Government should divert all road user charges to road construction and maintenance.

**AC 06** That the Association lobby;

a) to rectify the increasing disparity between the cost of diesel and petrol;

b) for a reduction in the excise rate on fuel; and

c) for a continuation of the ability to claim the fuel tax credit at the time of purchase.

**AC 05** That the Association lobby the Federal Government to remove a tax on a tax with respect to any GST paid on the excise portion of the price of fuel.

**05 Feb EC** That the Association/NFF lobby the Australian Government to phase in the fuel excise rebates for all business off road petrol fuel use, scheduled to commence on 1 July 2008 at a fifty percent (50%) rebate, to now commence from 1 July 2006 at a rebate rate of twenty-five percent (25%) for the first year, and be phased in at twenty-five percent (25%) increments thereafter.

**AC 02** That the Association lobby the Federal Treasurer to remove fuel excise tax off bio-diesel when blended with fossil fuels.

**AC 01** That the Association seek that:

(a) the original principles underlying the diesel fuel excise rebate scheme are carried forward to the Energy Credit (Grants) Scheme so that farmers and transporters are not disadvantaged; and

(b) the scheme is simple and transparent to minimise compliance and administration costs, with the ability to process on-farm and on-road claims together.

**AC 00** That the Association seek that fuel excise be at a flat rate, no longer indexed by the Consumer Price Index.

**99 Apr GC** That the Association request NFF to urge the Federal Assistant Treasurer to ensure that an effective way is found of dealing with genuine clerical errors in claims for the diesel fuel levy rebate without imposing onerous penalties.

**96 Oct GC** That the Association:

## Fuel taxes

(a) seek that for agricultural off-road use of diesel fuel, the Diesel Fuel Excise Rebate revert to an exemption;

**AC 96** (b) strongly reject any decrease in the Diesel Fuel Rebate Scheme as it currently applies to primary production;

**AC 99 Reaffirmed** (c) actively seek the removal or full rebate of:

(i) fuel (including petrol) used on-farm;

(ii) diesel used by the State Rail Authority exclusively on rolling stock.

**AC 08** That the Association lobby the Federal government to increase the Diesel Fuel tax credit to 50% of the 6 month running average (GST exclusive).

**AC 03** That the Association in conjunction with the National Farmers' Federation maintain intense efforts to ensure that the diesel fuel rebate for all road diesel usage is retained and is clearly identified at all levels of government as a rebate of an excise already paid.

## Goods and Services Tax

**AC 05** That the Association lobby the Federal Government to rationalise the GST implications for partnerships which may occur upon the death of a partner.

01 Feb GC That the Association urge the Federal Government to drastically simplify the GST reporting system.

**AC 00** That the Association continue to actively seek that:

(a) at all auctions of farm produce, inputs and machinery, the GST component be added after the fall of the hammer to the last bid; and

(b) farm produce, such as sale of livestock in the saleyard or "over-the-hook", be treated consistently for GST purposes.

00 Feb GC That the Association seek a seven-day electronic lodgement and return payment system for GST to be made available to exporters and processors of relevant farm produce as a matter of urgency, to offset the negative cash flow implications to processors and the subsequent discounting to producers.

**99 Feb** That the Association seek that country areas do not pay extra GST because of higher fuel costs.

## Income Tax

**97 May** Because of the taxation disadvantages that may be faced by primary producers as a result of fluctuating incomes and natural disasters, the Association seeks that the Income Tax Assessment Act should:

(a) contain income tax averaging provisions; which averaging system primary producers should be permitted to opt to join, leave or rejoin from time to time;

(b) contain measures designed to increase the preparedness of primary producers for drought and other natural disasters and for continued business structural improvements;

(c) be amended to extend the period relating to forced sale of stock from five years to seven years;

(d) provide a post free address for all PAYE and relevant taxation material collected and forwarded on behalf of the Australian Taxation Office; and

(e) be amended to allow as deductions against assessable income wages whether or not they be in connection with business activity.

## Managed Investment Schemes

**05 Oct EC** That the Association

(a) lobby the federal government to oppose the application of Managed Investment Schemes to pine plantations and

(b) expose the socio-economic and environmental consequences of large scale pine plantations.

**AC 07** That the Association continue to support the National Farmers' Federation in encouraging State and Federal Governments to abolish managed investment scheme taxation benefits that drive timber plantation expansion.

**AC 06** That the Association lobby for changes to Managed Investment Schemes to remove the specific taxation arrangements which are driving these schemes.

## Pay as You Go

**AC 00** That the Association seek that the current exemption applying to primary producers for quarterly provisional tax be carried through to the PAYG system.

## Regional Taxation

**AC 07** That the Association look at zoning taxation whereby people living a certain distance from the coast/metro areas would gain a tax advantage to encourage decentralisation of population to regional and remote areas.

## Restocking

## Restocking

restocking.

## Simplified Taxation System

**AC 04** That the Association seek an inquiry into the reasons and solutions for the low uptake of the Simplified Taxation System.

## Stamp Duty

**AC 02** That the Association lobby to abolish stamp duties on accident insurance, land acquisitions, and hire purchase lease and repayments due to the introduction of the GST replacing those revenue streams.

**97 EC** The Association seeks:

(a) the eligibility for exemption from stamp

duty on intergenerational transfers be extended to include:

(i) transferees who are natural persons or entities named in clause 4 of the guidelines; and

(ii) intra-family share transfer where the effect of the share transfer is to transfer rural property whilst retaining family ownership.

(b) the reduction of the number of stamp duties applicable to the farming and small business communities;

(c) no stamp duty payable on all hiring of contractors;

(d) to have related parties transactions

between bank accounts exempted from State Government taxes and duties **AC 97**; and

(e) the abolition of stamp duty on the transfer of all used motor vehicles.

## State Taxes

**AC 02** Lobby to abolish stamp duties on accident insurance, land acquisitions, and hire purchase lease and repayments due to the introduction of the GST replacing those revenue streams.

**AC 00** That the Association:

(a) oppose the principle of imposing a tax on a tax;

(b) call on the NSW Government to ensure that where state taxes, such as stamp duty, apply they are imposed on the GST-exclusive value

## Tax Incentives

**97 Oct GC** That the Association seek a freight rebate on the transport of lime for the correction of soil degradation.

**AC 08** That the Association in light of recurrent drought and proposed grain market deregulation, urgently push for an accelerated depreciation rate of at least 30% P.A. and to a total of 150% of the capital value of all grain, fodder, water storage structures and irrigation infrastructure improvements such as irrigation technology on farms.

**AC 03** That the Association seek the introduction of positive taxation measures to enable farmers to prepare for drought management, including tax rebates of at least 100% on capital investment for water conservation and fodder storage facilities and other allowances.

**AC 00** The Association seeks that the Federal Government introduce the 18% investment allowance on primary production machinery; and further

That the Income Tax Assessment Act and the appropriate new Tax System legislation should be altered to allow tax deductibility in the year of expenditure in respect of:

(a) 150% of expenditure on soil conservation and all Land Care Projects **AC 95**;

(b) 100% of expenditure on bores, dams and water reticulation facilities **94 GC**;

(c) establishment and protection of all tree plantings;

(d) 100% of expenditure on on-farm grain and fodder storage facilities **94 GC**;

(e) construction of boundary fences and yards within controlled footrot groups and eradication areas, as established by the NSW Department of Agriculture;

(f) expenditure on mains electricity extensions and on-farm electricity generating plant;

(g) clearing of re-growth;

(h) bushfire fighting equipment; and

(i) 150% for all costs incurred in liming farmland **97 GC**.

## Tax Reform

The Association seeks that the taxation system should encourage a productive and efficient agricultural industry and any taxation changes should recognise the importance of Australia's primary industry sector. Accordingly, there should be:

(a) reductions in total Federal, State and local government expenditure as a proportion of gross domestic product with emphasis on reducing consumption expenditure;

## Tax Reform

(b) continual review of Federal and State budget allocations with the aim of identifying where and to what extent expenditure cuts should be made;

(c) an economic policy from the Federal government aimed at increasing domestic private sector savings in Australia as a proportion of gross domestic product;

(d) no taxation of capital, including death duties, wealth taxes, gift duties and capital gains tax, apart from that on short term and speculative capital gain over a five year period (**AC 95**);

(e) the continuation of the emphasis on income as the broad basis for taxation.

**AC 04** That the Association seek the ATO issue warnings before prosecuting taxation infringements.

**AC 98** That the Association promotes tax reform but insist that any such reform is subject to the following conditions:

(a) is revenue neutral and provides Commonwealth/State accountability (**AC 99**);

(b) improves the competitiveness of Australian business;

(c) broadens the tax base without disadvantaging those on low and fluctuating incomes;

(d) leads to a system that is simple, transparent, can be enforced across all taxpayers including foreign investors and reduces wherever possible the costs of compliance;

(e) introduces a broad based consumption, or Pay As You Spend (PAYS), tax replacing:

(i) Wholesale Sales Tax;

(ii) Fuel excise except for a road user charge, and State taxes on all fuels, and

(iii) the most inefficient State taxes on business inputs;

(f) aligns the highest personal income tax rate and the company tax rate; and

(g) replaces Capital Gains Tax with a diminishing speculative gains tax on the sale of assets held for less than five years.

**AC 08** That the Association lobby the government to abolish or exempt luxury tax on 4WD wagons for registered primary producers.

## Taxation of Adjustment Payments

**AC 06** That the Association lobby the Federal Government in regard to any agricultural compensation and structural adjustment payments, but particularly in relation to water reform, that such payments be deemed to be capital in nature and not income in nature, for taxation purposes.

## Transport systems

### Integrated Road and Rail

**AC 05** That the Association lobby the Federal Government to immediately start the construction of the northern inland rail route from Melbourne to Brisbane through Moree and Toowoomba.

**01 May GC** That the Association support in principle the concept of the Blue Mountains infrastructure proposal.

**AC 96** That the Association encourage the development of inland-based transport systems to enable Australia to competitively market goods internationally.

**AC 02** That the Association seek legislation to establish regional advisory committees with community representation, on the matter of road and transport issues.

That the Association believes that the Government should take a planned integrated approach to transport problems, taking into account road, rail, air and sea systems.

**01 Feb GC** That the Association participates as a stakeholder in a process that will develop a national integrated transport plan.

**4 Mar EC** That the Association lobby the Federal Government to:

a) Fund the construction of the Inland Rail Route,

b) Conduct a comprehensive review into road and rail freight movements in NSW to identify future infrastructure investment strategies; and

c) In co-operation with State and Local Governments establish inland intermodal transport hubs.

### Road Transport Reforms

**08 AC** That the Association lobby the State and Federal Governments to implement the harmonisation of state transport laws and regulations, as recommended by the 2020 summit, by January 2009.

**08 AC** That the Association engage the state government and RTA to recommend practical removal of draconian penalty for the interpretation of NTC driver fatigue recommendations.

**04 Oct EC** That the Association lobby for:

(a) The RTA to develop road transport and movement of agricultural equipment policy in consultation with industry, and apply policy consistently;

(b) The development of road transport and movement of agricultural equipment policy based on acceptable consensus based outcomes;

(c) Changes in road transport and movement of agricultural equipment policy not to apply retrospectively;

(d) Stakeholders to be consulted regularly, preferably twice a year;

(e) The economic effects of road transport and movement of agricultural equipment policies to be considered;

## Road Transport Reforms

(f) The RTA to implement a clear, consistent and sensible communication strategy between stakeholders and the wider community;

(g) Consistency in road transport and movement of agricultural equipment policy between states.

**AC 03** That the Association seek:

(a) an inquiry into the adverse outcomes affecting rural producers in relation to the introduction of the new national road transport reforms;

(b) the State Government ensure that normal on-farm practices will not increase the risk of liability of farm owners, managers or their employees under the 'Chain of Responsibility' legislation when transporting agricultural products;

(c) the reasonable steps defence be clarified in relation to on-farm transport activities; and

(d) a reasonable tolerance for axle load limits imposed on all farm produce cartage.

**03 Apr EC** That the Association seek the implementation of concessional loading schemes, including "volumetric livestock loading" and "harvest loading", and an industry "Code of Practice" for the agriculture industry to increase farmers' compliance with road transport legislation.

**01 Feb GC** That the Association actively participate in protecting farmers from increased liability for activities beyond their control in relation to transport reform.

**01 May GC** That the Association urge the National Road Transport Commission to take account in the reform of heavy vehicle fatigue management of the particular needs and characteristics of rural communities and agricultural businesses by ensuring that:

(a) participation in flexible fatigue management programs is not beyond the means, financial or otherwise, of the small business sector; and

(b) the social and financial costs and benefits of any proposed changes to legislation are rigorously and openly assessed and fairly distributed.