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### **Taskforce established to consider Livestock Health and Pest Authorities**

The NSW Farmers' Association has today decided that it will establish a Taskforce to consider the Association's future level of support for Livestock Health and Pest Authorities in NSW.

Today's announcement follows robust debate on Tuesday where a motion recommending the abolition of the Authorities was narrowly defeated.

NSW Farmers' Association President-Elect Charles Armstrong says the close outcome of Tuesday's vote shows the divisive nature of the Livestock Health and Pest Authority debate for farmers in NSW.

"The Association has long supported the role of these local Authorities, yet it has become obvious that many farmers are feeling concerned with the system," Mr Armstrong said.

"As a result the Association will establish a Taskforce to consider our future position on the Authorities.

"This Taskforce will consider a number of items, including the possible delivery of a more equitable rating system that considers the minimum property size for rating purposes, carrying capacity and the pest insect levy.

"Also on the agenda is making sure the Council and Authorities are transparent and accountable regarding their budgets, and looking into travelling stock reserve ownership, costs and operations.

"The Taskforce will ultimately consider the effectiveness of the Authorities and whether they are representative of rate payers," Mr Armstrong said.

Mr Armstrong said NSW is alone in its rate-payer funded veterinary health and pest animal management system.

"Ratepayers in NSW contribute around \$29 million per year in animal health rates and general rates to the Authorities," Mr Armstrong said.

Since 1995, the Association has sought to protect the structure of the landholder system, but Tuesday's debate saw a substantial number of Delegates voting to abolish the current system of local livestock bio-security and pest animal control.

The third day of the NSW Farmers' Association Annual Conference is taking place in Sydney today.

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