



15<sup>th</sup> October 2010

## **Re: Submission to South Australia Strategic Plan**

As a Board we are very concerned that Agriculture has not been included in the South Australia Strategic Plan (SASP).

In 2009 \$4.2 billion worth of produce came from 68% of the land area of six non arid NRM regions of SA controlled by agricultural managers.

This harvested product is renewable, unlike mining which is a one off, and with sustainable management of the State's land resources agriculture will continue to serve the State and its population well into the future.

There needs to be an Agricultural Plan developed by 2012 which could be driven by targets such increasing the value of agriculture from \$4.2 billion in 09/10 to \$10 billion by 2018. The ABA would be prepared to assist in the development of an Agricultural Plan.

Inclusion of Agriculture in SASP demonstrates commitment by the State to this vital sector and instils confidence by producers to be innovative and invest in food production at a time when there is growing concerns for food security both locally and internationally. We have producers on the front foot, innovative, we have productive natural resource that if properly managed can provide sustainable export opportunities for this State. The future prosperity of our State will depend on how well growers take up the opportunities that are available.

Agriculture needs to be included in the SASP, as Government has a role in enabling urban communities to recognise and re-engage with the importance and value of a strong viable agricultural industry for city and State economic and social sustainability.

In addition to an Agricultural Plan we propose the SASP includes a commitment to increased Research & Development, protection of prime agricultural land for food and fibre production, water resources, soil cover, and human capital in agriculture.

### Research & Development (R & D) in agriculture

- The last SASP indicated a commitment from the State to invest in R & D over and above the other States by 10% per capita share by 2010 and increase this to 25% by 2014 under SASP T4.10 for both private & public spheres. We



believe this is specifically relevant to the State's investment in agriculture with recent budgetary trends indicating the Government believes otherwise.

- Direct some R & D into development of renewal energy sources like bio-fuels as per the last SASP T3.12.
- Food resources and supply are national security issues so investment in a healthy vibrant agricultural sector can not only increase our State's production it can also support neighbouring countries to increase their food production – an effective defence strategy for the nation.
- R & D into innovative ways to increase water use efficiency in irrigation, and in dry land production.
- Ongoing R & D to maintain diversity of production base and to support food and fibre production in a future impacted by climate change.

#### Protection of Production Resources

- Land
  - There is increasing loss of prime agricultural land being used for housing developments. And also enforced loss of productivity on adjacent land with buffer zones because of the issues of smell, noise, chemical usage, urban pets. All pose conflict and inflict restrictions on farming practices and use.
  - Our most productive land needs to be identified so that it can be protected by legislation
  - Recognise that land usage has benefits for other industries eg. tourism, provision of green belts for society well being, biodiversity preservation, and natural resource management
  - Include soil cover target and review of T3.3 from the last SASP, which states that by 2014 we achieve a 20% increase in SA agriculture cropping land that is adequately protected from erosion
  - Adoption of R & D and new technologies to protect natural and production resources
  
- Water
  - No increase in usage by urban areas
  - Increased reuse of water for parks, agriculture, and industrial purposes (require a target quantity)
  - Capture of storm water for parks, agriculture, and industrial purposes.
  - Adoption of innovative ways to increase water use efficiency in irrigation and dry land production
  
- Human Capital
  - Increased Extension of R & D to food and fibre producers
  - Build capacity of rural and regional communities to maintain a healthy contribution to the State.
  - Technology (eg. Broadband) available to support non agricultural workforce in rural and regional communities to retain critical mass and

therefore support previous SASP T5.9 - Regional Population levels retain regional South Australian's share of the State population (18%)

- Capacity building, and support for succession planning within the agriculture research community
- Food
  - Support food production in SA to retain food integrity rather than importing foods that may not be required to meet the same high standards demanded of our food producers, and to limit exposure to incursions from biosecurity risks
  - To ensure high quality and quantity of diverse food products for domestic consumption
  - Retain South Australia's reputation of being an exporter of high quality produce and capture a premium for our product
  - Increase food exports in line with the previous SASP T1.14 where total exports are to treble in value by 2014

The more urban encroachment spreads, the further food production is pushed into marginal areas that have greater climate variability and have less reliable production. This will lead to loss of jobs, reduced export tonnage, and less revenue for the State's economy.

Agriculture is the most widespread natural resource management system in the State, and more than 2/3 of South Australia's agricultural land is managed by farmers.

Protecting the productive capacity of our land through recognising the value of agricultural production and including it in the South Australia Strategic Plan is essential to a viable future.

Regards



(Richard Murdoch)

**Chairman**

**Advisory Board of Agriculture**

**[Governing body of the Agricultural Bureau of SA]**