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Hon John Rau MP,  
Minister of Planning,  
GPO Box 464  
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Dear Mr Rau

Recently Livestock SA made a submission to the Mount Barker District Council on its proposed Rural (Primary Production Protection) Development Plan Amendment. We found the proposal both innovative and practical and congratulated the Mount Barker District Council on their proposed amendment.

There are three issues in the proposal that Livestock SA was especially pleased to see included. These were support for "the right to farm", defining whom is liable for buffer zones, and a commonsense approach to locating and constructing farm buildings and infrastructure.

One of the major impediments to agricultural productivity that has increased in recent years has been the diminishing right of an existing farmer to carry on with their business without interference; in other words having the "right to farm". As small farms or subdivided blocks are acquired by people seeking a change in lifestyle, issues such as noise from machinery operations or bellowing from newly weaned lambs and calves, odours from silage being fed out, or the movement of stock with the aid of farm dogs all raise serious objections. The Amendment places the onus on the purchaser of land in a farming area to understand that when moving to a rural setting there are matters that differ greatly from an urban environment.

In some areas of the State the matter of buffer zones, when there is a change in the type of farming undertaken, has led to much conflict. The classic situation is when broad-acre farming land is acquired for horticultural activities. Here the major issues are the use of herbicides to control weeds on land near horticultural crops. The Amendment clearly puts the onus for the provision of a buffer zone on that person or entity undertaking the change in land use.

The third aspect relates to the construction of farm buildings and farming infrastructure. Under the ordinance of some rural Local Government entities visual amenity takes precedence over the location of farm buildings, yards or laneways. In many cases, when a facility such as a shearing shed, milking shed or sheep or cattle yards need replacing there is very little capacity in relocating such a facility. The associated infrastructure such as fences, watering points, power access, loading facilities and transport access are already in place and replicating them at a new location would be beyond the financial capacity of most farmers in the State. The Amendment uses a common sense approach to creating new or replacing existing farm buildings and farming infrastructure.

Livestock SA believes the Mount Barker Amendment needs to be adopted not only by other Local Council but should be incorporated into State Legislation.

Yours sincerely

Geoff Power  
President Livestock SA