



Advancing Rural Queensland

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AgForce Concerned by Commission of Audit Recommendations

AGFORCE Queensland has identified a number of recommendations made within the National Commission of Audit report that, if adopted by the Federal Government, would result in a disproportionate impact on the rural sector.

General President, Ian Burnett, said while the organisation recognised the budgetary challenges before the Government, and that some cuts must be made across all of society and the economy, he held significant concern future agricultural production and efficiency would be damaged should the recommendations be implemented.

“We acknowledge many of the recommendations involve a streamlining of government services and that the Commission flagged further efforts will be required on labour market reform, deregulation, energy policy and provision of economic infrastructure,” Mr Burnett said.

“AgForce also most certainly endorses the Commission’s recognition that any moves to increase competition, such as the outsourcing of service delivery, should consider the interests of rural and remote communities.

“However, Australian agriculture is already amongst the least supported by its government in the OECD and further cuts would surely lead to a significant negative impact on the sector.”

Of greatest concerns are recommendations to halve the co-contribution to rural research and development and to abolish the rural CRC program, both key contributors to securing the productivity gains essential to ensuring agricultural competitiveness and affordable food and fibre.

“We are also highly concerned as to any proposals to reduce funding for drought assistance, the Rural Financial Counselling Service, Export Market Development Grants and the Farm Concessional Loan Scheme,” Mr Burnett said.

“With National Farmers’ Federation, AgForce will now engage with the Federal Government in the lead up to the budget to ensure that the implications of adopting Audit recommendations are well understood and any decisions on services to agriculture are targeted appropriately.”

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Who is AgForce? AgForce represents thousands of Queensland broadacre producers who recognise the value in having a strong voice. AgForce leads the way to ensure agriculture’s social, economic and environmental contribution is recognised by all levels of government. AgForce works alongside landholders, encourages and supports the next generation, builds industry partnerships and skills and promotes agriculture - for secure, sustainable, progressive and profitable food and fibre into the future.