**GrainGrowers’ National Policy Group Meeting Update**

16 and 22 September 2020

GrainGrowers’ [National Policy Group](file:///%5C%5CGGA-FILES01%5COffice%5CForm%20Documents%5C2020%20GrainGrowers%20collateral%5CNational%20Policy%20Group) (NPG) met via video conference on 16 and 22 September. The NPG endorsed two new policy positions (Liquid Fuel and People and Capability Policies) and discussed the GrainGrowers Carbon Calculator report and advocacy efforts on trade.

**Carbon Calculators**

There are many different approaches to determine the greenhouse gas, or emissions on a farm with varied results depending on the application of farm-level information. GrainGrowers has been advocating for a consistent approach to carbon accounting and measurement through its [Climate Change Policy](https://www.graingrowers.com.au/graingrowers-climate-change-policy/). This project, initiated by GrainGrowers with Kondinin Group, outlines the availability and functions of a range of greenhouse gas calculators. NPG members discussed the findings of the research which saw five carbon calculators compared and assessed on their features, usability, and accuracy. The research report *Carbon Calculators compared for Australia Grain Growers* is available [here](https://www.graingrowers.com.au/graingrowers-carbon-calculator-report/).

**Trade – China**

The grains industry is impacted by a range of broad political issues that are outside its control, for example China has imposed 80.5% duties on imported barley from Australia. GrainGrowers and the Industry Working Group (consisting of Grain Producers Australia, Grain Trade Australia and Australian Grain Exporters Council) has developed a policy request to the Australian Government calling for the establishment of an Industry Recovery Fund, to help the industry develop new markets and ensure existing markets continue. To find out more on the Fund refer to GrainGrowers’ [Pre-Budget Submission.](https://www.graingrowers.com.au/graingrowers-pre-budget-submission-2020-21/)

**Biosecurity**

The NPG was joined by a senior representative from the Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment (DAWE) to discuss Australia’s biosecurity surveillance measures, what is changing in Australia’s biosecurity environment and how we ensure we continue to keep high risk plant pests at bay.

**GrainGrowers’ Liquid Fuel Policy Position**

Liquid fuel underpins much of the agriculture and grain supply chains with 84% of energy use on farm coming from diesel. The NPG has endorsed GrainGrowers’ Liquid Fuel Policy Position which seeks to ensure the Australian grains industry’s exposure and reliance upon liquid fuels is managed effectively. The policy seeks:

1. Anindependent review to investigate acceptable emergency levels held domestically and how to adhere to International Energy Agency (IEA) requirements (such as the 90-day supplies standards) and implement most effective approach to achieving these levels.
2. Amendment to the *Liquid Fuel Emergency Act 1984* and state and territories associating Acts and Guidelines to include farm businesses / agricultural services to be classified as essential services to preserving the health, safety, and general wellbeing of community.
3. A consistent, two yearly review of the National Energy Security Assessment, to identify risks associated with the system and design appropriate measures that consider the agricultural sector and its supply chains, to minimise risks quickly.
4. A comprehensive national alternative fuel framework from Government that observes sources such as biofuels where appropriate and where doing so does not contradict other GrainGrowers’ policy objectives.
5. Detailed analysis of the costs, benefits, and timelines for redirection of currently exported Australian crude oil to be refined domestically in times of crises.

GrainGrowers’ new Liquid Fuel Policy will be released shortly, along with targeted advocacy to government and industry stakeholders.

**GrainGrowers’ People and Capability Policy Position**

People and capability are critically important to farm businesses, the broader agriculture sector and the economy. The NPG endorsed GrainGrowers’ new People and Capability Policy principles:

* **Shared responsibility.** The agricultural sector’s people and capability is a shared responsibility between growers, governments, industry, post-farm gate supply chain, service providers, academia and the education and training sector.
* **Employer of choice.** Attraction and retention of people in the grains sector requires businesses to establish a strong reputation as an employer of choice and implement advanced practices associated with people and capability, including career pathways and progression.
* **Migration Policy, strong communities and regional growth.** Community is the heart of regional Australia. To meet ever-evolving needs, growers and regional business require access local and transient skilled talent pools to fill diverse casual, temporary and full-time positions. Attracting and retaining this talent requires sound migration policy and investment in regional development to support community growth and garner enduring benefits for regional Australia.
* **Health, safety, and wellbeing.** Stakeholders are committed to a safe workplace and focused on driving novel approaches to problem resolution that generate cost savings, effectiveness and efficiency through health, safety and wellbeing, rather than focusing solely on regulatory burden and costs associated with compliance. However, modern awards and associated legislation should be practical and easy to understand, and farm businesses are accountable for legal responsibilities and rights relevant to their business.
* **Capability.** Capability building is central to performance and sustainability and requires a strategic management approach to continuing education and professional development as an integral part of workforce planning.

GrainGrowers’ new People and Capability Policy will be released shortly, along with targeted advocacy to government and industry stakeholders.

**Next Steps**

GrainGrowers would like to thank our Western NPG members for their contributions over the past three years. For further information about any of the issues discussed or to provide feedback, please get in touch at enquiry@graingrowers.com.au or

(02) 9286 2000.

**Applying for NPG**

The NPG provides input into, reviews and approves GrainGrowers’ policy positions that are developed on behalf of all Australian grain farmers. NPG comprises 15 elected grower representatives, five from each of the Western, Southern and Northern regions. The group meets several times a year in person to debate the important issues effecting growers. Further information is available at: <https://www.graingrowers.com.au/policy/national-policy-group/>

**Interested in joining the NPG?**

**GrainGrowers is currently accepting applications for the Western Region NPG representatives, which close Monday 19 October 2020. Growers in SA and WA are encouraged to apply! Please keep an eye out for updates in e-news and the website.**