

NORTHERN TERRITORY CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION INC

Member - National Farmers' Federation & Cattle Council of Australia



Media Release

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Bush boundaries plan an aggressive tax assault on NT cattlemen

Today's Local Government Advisory meeting in Alice Springs only confirms the cattlemen's concerns that the NT Government is rail-roading major reform package across the Territory without broad community consultation. The Governments has already set and agreed on its local government outcomes.

Proposed new local government boundaries in the bush will force unfair taxes on fiscally responsible cattle producers and see them prop up the recovery process for failed community councils, the NT Cattlemen's Association (NTCA) said today.

"Territory cattle producers operating in affected areas have much to lose and absolutely nothing to gain from this ill-considered proposal by the NT Government," Association President Roy Chisholm said. "This is nothing but an aggressive tax assault on the pastoral estate.

"Our members are vehemently opposed to the boundary changes and to what can only be seen as a second tier tax grab by the NT Government. The pastoral sector will bear the main brunt of added tax imposts, and this is not acceptable. It's another example of this government's naive disregard for the value of the Territory pastoral industry."

Mr Chisholm said members were extremely disappointed that the Local Government Minister had reneged at the last minute on an arrangement to discuss their concerns at an NTCA meeting set down for next Wednesday.

"A report we've commissioned from an independent consultant on behalf of the pastoral clearly demonstrates that the rural sector and remote communities will suffer badly from this move.

"We agree with the government's argument that many existing small local government councils are mismanaged and technologically insolvent," Mr Chisholm said. "But it should not be the pastoral sector's responsibility to pay taxes to bail out these organisations and prop up their recovery process - not today nor at any time in the future.

"We urge the government to consult with the community to better understand the imminent problems before moving down this road and forcing an impost on responsible property holders and small indigenous communities that will be forced to rates.

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'Advancing and protecting the interests of the cattle producers in the Northern Territory'