

12 December 2023

NSW Government response to report “An Independent Agriculture Commissioner – Options and Discussion”

Recommendation	Government response
<p>1. Appoint a Commissioner with a three-year term to:</p>	<p>Support –</p> <p>The NSW Government supports contracting an independent Agriculture Commissioner for up to a three-year term. The independent Agriculture Commissioner will provide independent advice to the Minister for Agriculture and Government and will be supported by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI).</p>
<p>a. Provide advice to the NSW Government and its agencies on agriculture and land use related matters, and other issues at the request of the Minister for Agriculture.</p>	<p>Support –</p> <p>The NSW Government supports the independent Agriculture Commissioner providing independent, strategic advice to the Government about issues relating to strategic agricultural land use to inform strategic planning decisions and support a more sustainable and productive agriculture industry.</p>
<p>b. Assist NSW Government agencies to develop a rural land use policy for Government consideration to address the matters identified in this and previous reports to the Government. The policy should be sufficiently detailed to provide guidance to land use regulators and planners on how to approach competing demands for land use and access from food and fibre producers, residential development, renewable energy developers, public</p>	<p>Support in principle –</p> <p>The NSW Government is committed to accommodating a range of land use priorities that support primary producers and regional communities while improving sustainability and economic growth in NSW. Balancing and prioritising competing policy objectives and demands for land use is complex and will need to be carefully considered. The NSW</p>

Recommendation	Government response
<p>infrastructure, biodiversity recovery and carbon sequestration. This policy should provide a basis for implementing relevant government policies in an efficient way, address potential third party impacts, and maintain the growth trajectory of the States food systems.</p>	<p>Government will continue to explore opportunities to provide clarity on the Government’s strategic approach to balancing these competing policy objectives and to inform strategic planning decisions and support decision making about agricultural land use. The Agriculture Commissioner will provide input into this work.</p>
<p>c. Assist the DPI (Department of Primary Industries) to develop an ongoing system for defining, identifying, and mapping agricultural lands and its use throughout the State, co-ordinated with other State land use mapping processes and products.</p>	<p>Noted –</p> <p>The NSW Government recognises that maps are a useful resource to identify agricultural land, enabling improved consideration to inform strategic planning decisions and support a more sustainable and productive agricultural industry.</p> <p>DPI is progressing work related to agricultural land use and will continue to engage across Government to further this work.</p> <p>The Agriculture Commissioner will provide advice to assist DPI with this work in conjunction with activities to develop a cohesive, whole-of-government approach to broader rural land use planning.</p>
<p>d. Assist DPI to design and conduct a pilot of the Farm Practices Panel with a volunteer agricultural industry to test its potential to reduce the growth in conflict between agricultural producers and neighbours on a broader scale.</p>	<p>Support –</p> <p>The NSW Government supports DPI establishing a pilot Farm Practices Panel to review a volunteer agricultural industry’s code of practice to evaluate operating practice.</p> <p>The Agriculture Commissioner will test the potential of the Farm Practices Panel to assist providing clarity and consistency for planning decisions and mitigating land use conflict.</p> <p>The Agriculture Commissioner will provide advice on establishment of the pilot Farm Practices Panel, Chair the pilot Panel and advise on its effectiveness.</p>

Recommendation	Government response
<p>2. During the second half of the Commissioner’s term, introduce a Bill to the NSW Parliament to:</p>	<p>Noted –</p> <p>The NSW Government supports contracting an independent Agriculture Commissioner to provide independent advice to Government. The functions of the Commissioner do not require a statutory basis at this time.</p>
<p>a. Create a statutory office of the Agriculture Commissioner to give the position greater authority to influence policy and regulation relating to the NSW agriculture sector.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p>b. Provide the Commissioner with sufficient powers to access information to facilitate the efficient conduct of performance assessments of agencies in implementing the Government’s land use policy.</p>	<p>As above.</p>

© State of New South Wales through Regional NSW 2023. The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing December, 2023. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that the information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Regional NSW or the user’s independent adviser.