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SADA NEWSLETTER MAY 2020

Keep out: Trespasses will be prosecuted

Protesters who trespass on primary production land will now face tougher penalties under new laws that passed Parliament last month.

Attorney-General, Vickie Chapman said the new laws would significantly increase the penalties for those found trespassing on farming land.

“Our farmers and food producers play a huge role in our economy and it is important there are suitable deterrents in place to protect these family businesses and supply chains,” she said.

“Through these changes, vigilante activists who break into a farm to promote their cause will be held accountable for their actions – this Government will not tolerate disturbing livestock or destroying their property to make a point.”

The new legislation includes the creation of a new, standalone aggravated farm trespass offence.

“Our previous trespassing offences didn’t adequately cover the additional risks associated with livestock and agricultural properties,” Ms Chapman said.

“This new offence acknowledges that individuals trespassing on primary production land and interfering with the conduct of the business, not only put the safety of people at risk, but also increase the risk of possible biosecurity and food contamination.

... To be continued (page 2)

Website connecting workers to seasonal jobs in SA

Seasonal Jobs SA is a new website launched recently to help source seasonal workers for essential agricultural jobs across South Australia.

COVID-19 restrictions have resulted in a significant reduction in the numbers of international and interstate workers taking up seasonal roles in South Australia. Now, farmers are calling on South Australians to register as pickers, packers, tree planters, processors and helpers to keep our supply chain flowing so we can continue to have access to vital and locally grown food and beverages.

Seasonal workers are important to South Australia, and over the next 12 months, there will be hundreds of diverse jobs opening up in seasonal work across the state.

Seasonal Jobs SA is a temporary digital platform to show the types of seasonal roles in agriculture available, what skills and training are required, where the jobs are, and how to apply. It includes important information about COVID-19 restrictions and toolkit resources for workers and employers.

Employers will be able to list their available jobs for free on the job board.

Seasonal Jobs SA is an initiative of the South Australian Government, delivered by PIRSA.

Visit www.seasonaljobs.sa.gov.au to find out more.

Plan how you stay safe

With what has been happening in other States at abattoirs, retail food sector and nursing homes, it is certainly not a time to be complacent or to relax in how you are managing Covid-19 in your business. We have seen how the virus can spread easily and rapidly through manufacturing and close contact situations.

Be aware of how your business is managing deliveries and visitors – anyone can be a vector and spread the virus to your business.

Some interstate businesses have been impacted by 14 day closures due to the virus being detected – **TO MINIMISE POTENTIAL IMPACT TO YOUR BUSINESS** make sure you’re able to demonstrate how staff/workgroups are maintaining distancing, how staff movements can be traced and tracked, and how your business is maintaining Covidsafe cleaning & hygiene.

Time spent now to review your systems and risk management arrangements is an investment in your business.

Plan how you reopen and stay safe - The National COVID-19 Coordination Commission has developed a planning tool to help you develop a plan to keep your workers, customers and the community safe as you reopen or increase your business activities. View the planning tool [here](#).

For the most recent information on SA’s response to the Coronavirus pandemic visit www.sa.gov.au/COVID-19.



Genetic Crops—A result.

The South Australian Parliament has now passed a law which will enable the growing of genetically modified crops in South Australia.

Under agreed amendments to the *Genetically Modified Crops Management (Designated Area) Amendment Bill 2019*, local councils now have a time-limited ability to apply to remain a GM-free area, but ultimately the final decision will rest with the Primary Industries and Regional Development Minister.

SADA urges the Minister to take a conservative approach to a council application to remain GM free and a council should offer more than a “just because” approach to making such an application to the minister. For too long SA farmers have been forced to sit behind the eight ball when it comes to competing with other jurisdictions. An application by a council to the minister that is not based on either science or sound business considerations should not rate highly on the minister’s list of considerations.

SADA looks forward to its membership being able to be more effective by relying on technologies that will have the effect of lowering the costs of doing business and/or increasing productivity.

Trespasses will be prosecuted Cont.

“Those found guilty could face a \$10,000 fine or 12 months in prison, as well as paying compensation to the farmer.”

Other legislative changes include:

- increasing the penalties for interfering with farm gates from \$750 to \$1,500 and introducing on-the-spot fines of \$375 for this offence
- increasing penalties for disturbing farm animals to \$2,500 or 6 months imprisonment
- doubling fines for other trespassing offences if they take place on primary production land.

SADA also wishes to acknowledge the work that was done on this Bill by the former SADA President, now Member for Finniss, David Basham, who has maintained an active interest in the changes to the law throughout the whole process.

While SADA did not get all that it lobbied for, (we wanted a farmer right to issue a trespass notice), the changes are a substantial improvement to the law and much of what has been adopted were based on recommendations made by SADA.

Furthermore, SADA notes that as other jurisdictions have moved in this direction the incidence of farm trespass reported in the media has sharply diminished. Clearly the message is getting through, however, we continue to urge vigilance on the part of all farmers.

Coles Moves into SA

COLES has announced that it will expand Coles’ direct farmer to retailer drinking milk approach into SA (as well as WA). Coles began recruiting suppliers on 14 May 2020.

Coles began purchasing directly from farmers in Victoria and New South Wales in July last year. The model sees Coles directly purchasing milk from farmers and arranging pick up of the milk. SADA understands that Saputo does the direct bottling as a contract processor/bottler in those jurisdictions however, the contractual relationship is directly between Coles and the farmer. Coles will probably turn to Lion and Lactalis in Adelaide to do the bottling.

Coles’ commercial chief executive Greg Davis indicated that Coles believe that enlarging the approach would result in a more competitive farmgate price being offered to dairy farmers.

Mr Davies has indicated Coles’s pride in offering a new pathway to farmers to enter the supermarket space and Coles was looking forward to extending their operation into SA.

Mr Davies told the Weekly Times that “By offering farmers the opportunity to lock in a price and giving them choice on the length of contract, Coles is investing in the long-term sustainability of our suppliers and the Australian dairy sector.”

Coles will offer one and two year contracts to farmers to supply milk directly to the supermarket chain. SADA notes that both Coles and Woolworths have moved away from the \$1 milk product and now that Coles is a direct purchaser in SA, SADA urges farmers to shop around for who they supply.

The Lower Lakes have been (mostly) fresh for at least 2,000 years

During the awful drought that has brought so much suffering to the farmers in the Murray Darling Basin there have been increasing calls to find extra sources of water. This has led the NSW Deputy Premier, amongst others, to call for the removal of the barrages in the lower lakes of the Murray, near the Murray mouth. The lakes evaporate up to 800 G/L each year. The Murray Darling Basin plan commits water to the lakes from the Murray to maintain the lakes in a fresh state as well as in assisting to keep the mouth of the Murray open to the sea.

The suggestion was that by removing the barrages and installing a further lock (lock zero) at Wellington that 800 G/L could be retained for use by farmers upstream thus assisting them through their period of real pain. Poor journalism has compounded the issue.

In assisting to add to the muddy the waters Peter Gell (School of Health and Life Sciences, Federation University Australia, Ballarat), released a paper considering the lower lakes on 20 June 2019, called *“Watching the tide roll away – contested interpretations of the nature of the Lower Lakes of the Murray Darling Basin”*, which added fuel to the debate. The independent review into the science informing water management of the lower lakes was authored by Dr Francis Chiew of CSIRO and four other experts in the field. Released under the imaginative and pithy

title: *“Independent Review of Lower Lakes Science Informing Water Management”*

Review findings: In 2020 the independent panel delivered their findings. Key findings include:

Removing the barrages would have significant ecological and socio-economic impact.

- Without the barrages, the freshwater values in the Lower Lakes cannot be maintained.
- This will significantly change the ecological character of the Ramsar-listed site, which is a wetland of international importance and which we have an international obligation to maintain.
- This will also impact traditional owner values and other socio-economic values that are reliant on a healthy Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth system.

Removing the barrages would not result in any water savings if targets informed by science and modelling and envisaged under the Basin Plan are to be met.

- The additional Murray River inflow secured under the Basin Plan has been shown to enhance the ecological outcomes, building resilience in the system and providing some inflow during dry years.
- Environmental water is managed for multiple benefits, where water is reused as it flows down the river, to sustain a healthy system across the entire Basin. Most of the environmental water reaching the Lower Lakes has also benefited upstream assets.
- Removing the barrages would not result in any water savings if targets informed by science and modelling and envisaged under the Basin Plan are to be met.



Under climate change, the management of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth would become increasingly challenging.

- Sea level rise would alter the hydrodynamics of the Coorong and Murray Mouth, and cause more seawater to flow into the Lower Lakes. Evaporation from the Lakes would be higher. Therefore, more Murray River inflow would be needed to achieve Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth outcomes. However, catchment runoff in the southern Murray-Darling Basin is projected to decline under climate change.
- There are gaps in the knowledge of the biophysical impact under climate change, and the social, environmental and economic vulnerabilities. There is a need to develop adaptation options, not just for the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth, but as part of the whole Murray-Darling Basin system.

The effect of all of this is that returning the lakes to a saline condition would amount to a fundamental ecological change doing harm to the Ramsar listed site and potentially placing Australia in breach of its international agreements in protecting the site.

It is unlikely that this will be the end of the debate. However, the upside is that the rains which are now falling in the Murray Darling Basin and which are predicted to continue raining for the next six months will take some of the heat out of the debate.



