CALLS TO RE-EXAMINE AGRICULTURAL LEVY LEGISLATION TO ENSURE PURPOSE

5 March 2013

The **Agricultural Levies Institute of Australia** has today written to the Federal Agriculture Minister, the Hon Joe Ludwig MP, and the Shadow Minister, proposing that both Parties establish a bipartisan review of the Commonwealth statutory agricultural levy arrangements to ensure that the relevant Acts and regulations specify the purpose for which those levies were imposed.

For some time now Australian farmers have been kept in the dark about what their levies can legally be spent on. While some legislation directs levies to research and/or marketing bodies, other levies are being used to fund policy organisations, administration functions and ‘passive’ agri-political activities.

“In most cases the Acts and regulations are not legally explicit in their description on what activities the levy funds are ‘authorised’ to be used for”, the Chief Executive Officer of the Agricultural Levies Institute of Australia, Mr Spiro Adamopoulos, told a meeting of concerned stakeholders.

In some cases the original intended use of the levies have been manipulated over time, being redefined and redirected to activities that were not originally specified in the levy proposal by the levy payers. In many cases the levy payers are not made aware of the intended use of the levy until it’s too late.

If there is a discrepancy between the legal use of the levy and the actual use of the levy, then the government should document and justify why this is occurring.

“This goes to the heart of whether levies are being used for the benefit of the producers who pay the levy”, said the Chief Executive Officer of the Agricultural Levies Institute of Australia Mr Spiro Adamopoulos.

“The Agricultural Levies Institute of Australia is determined to work for the interests of farmers in getting the best out of their levies” said the CEO. “That’s our motto, ‘Partners with Producers’ and our objective is to uphold the interests of farmers”.

“I hope the Minister and the Shadow representative feel the same as we do here at the ‘Levies Institute’ and announce a review of the legislation, focussing on the legal purpose for imposition”, said Mr Adamopoulos.

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For further information, visit the Agricultural Levies Institute of Australia website [www.leviesinstitute.com.au](http://www.leviesinstitute.com.au/).