



April 5, 2016

To whom it may concern,

Onions Australia wishes to make a submission regarding the Inquiry into the Primary Industries Levies and Charges Collection Amendment Bill 2016.

Onions Australia is extremely concerned by the proposed changes to the Primary Industries Levies and Charges Collection Act 1991 that would allow the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources to provide levy and charge payer information to the rural research and development corporations for the purpose of developing levy payer registers.

RDCs have long been trying to insert themselves between levy payers and Industry Representative Bodies, particularly within the horticulture sector, with little success.

IRBs have been elected to represent levy payers – by levy payers – and to provide a conduit between the RDCs and levy payers.

Given the recent transition of Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) to Horticulture Innovation Australia (HIA) there was opportunity for levy payers to register as the new owners of HIA.

Of a possible 32000 levy payers and growers in Australia, less than 2000 signed up, effectively proving the reluctance of levy payers to provide their details to a RDC.

Onions Australia feels that this evidence should be noted by the Inquiry, and taken as a reflection of levy payers' desire to keep their details from RDCs.

The system does not need to be changed as it does not reflect the wishes of levy payers nor IRBs.

Kind regards

Lechelle Earl
Onions Australia CEO