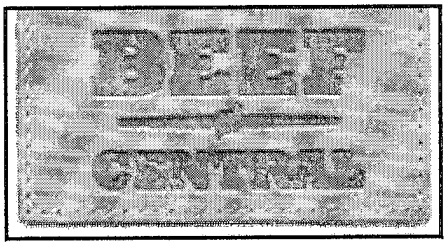
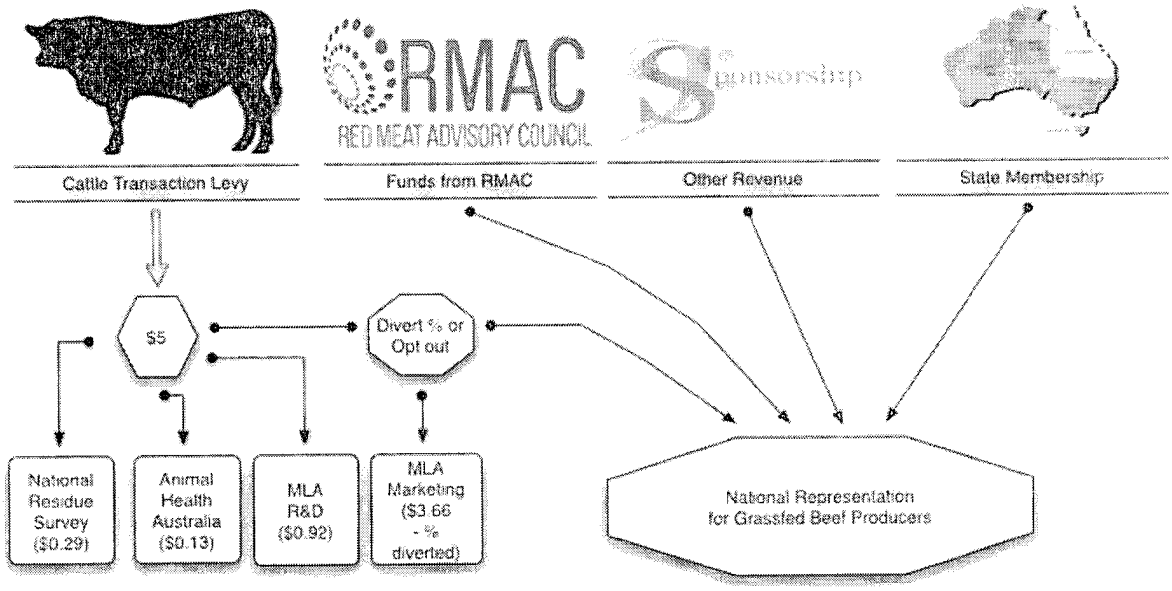


**8 Apr 2013** Last updated 13:38 EST

# Cattle Council embarks on major reform process

By James Nason 25 Jan 2012




**A diagram showing how a draft restructure model outlined by Cattle Council of Australia yesterday would be funded.**

The Cattle Council of Australia has embarked on a major reform process with the release yesterday of a proposed new restructure model for industry consultation.

If accepted in its current form the proposed model would see beef cattle producers given the choice to divert part of their $5/head cattle transaction levy payments towards funding national representation activities.

Under the draft model the new board would comprise a mix of directors nominated by State Farm Organisations and directly-elected levy payers.

Cattle Council of Australia has also announced that it will soon commence the development of a Beef Industry Strategic Plan in consultation with industry to prioritise strategic imperatives for the newly restructured body, and to outline required funding levels.

**Drive for change**

A strong push has emerged for reform in recent years, based on the view that the national body representing Australia's grassfed beef producers needs to be better resourced, more accessible to all producers and more representative of the entire industry.

Cattle Council of Australia has had to stretch comparatively meagre resources further and further each year as it attempts to keep pace with the growing array of issues and challenges confronting Australia's multi-billion dollar beef cattle industry.

The small organisation participates in more than 60 committees, oversees the annual expenditure of $72 million of grassfed levies by Meat and Livestock Australia, the National Residue Survey and Animal Health Australia, communicates directly with Governments and NGOs here and overseas and provides a round the clock voice for the industry in the media, among various other roles.

It does that job with a national budget of $1.3 million, which has not grown in more than 10 years, and a full time staff of just 4.5, backed up by its directors who are unpaid volunteers.

Cattle Council currently draws its funding from three sources: membership income from State Farm Organisations (which totals $230,000 annually); contributions from the Red Meat Advisory Council fund and sponsorship and Government funding agreements.

"Based on Cattle Council's current workload and the rapidly increasing expectation from the beef production sector that Cattle Council must deliver a more comprehensive service to all of Australia's grassfed levy payers, current funding levels are not adequate," the CCA restructure document says.

**Proposed structure**

Cattle Council yesterday released a draft restructure model for industry consultation.

It said that in developing the proposed model it has taken account of industry-input received to date, which has included strong calls for multiple avenues of participation and greater industry-wide representation, and the objectives of its existing constitution.

In its current form the new model would see existing funding sources expanded to include an "opt-out" contribution of a percentage of $3.66 marketing component of the $5 cattle transaction levy.

Producers would have the option to "opt-out" of having a percentage of their levy diverted for national representation. Where producers chose to opt-out, their funds would be re-diverted to MLA and used for marketing.

Cattle Council noted that it was important to provide an "opt-out" option, as forcing producers to pay for national representation would be akin to compulsory unionism.

Producers would also be required to agree to join the national representative organisation as a member before they could vote or stand for direct election, to ensure freedom of association was maintained.

The process was preferred because it used existing collection methods, but it would also create additional administration costs.

Industry would also have to decide what percentage would be approporiate to deduct from the existing marketing levy for national represer

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The proposed model contains a boa eight State Farm Organisations, and of the directly elected directors wou northern WA - and two from the sou

Voting entitlements would be stagg each organisation is responsible for. five votes, the NSW Farmers directo

The new model offers three levels o through the issues-focused sub-com styled annual conference.

A restructure document released yes options that Cattle Council consider can be viewed by clicking here

Cattle Council president Andrew O discussion with industry stakeholde

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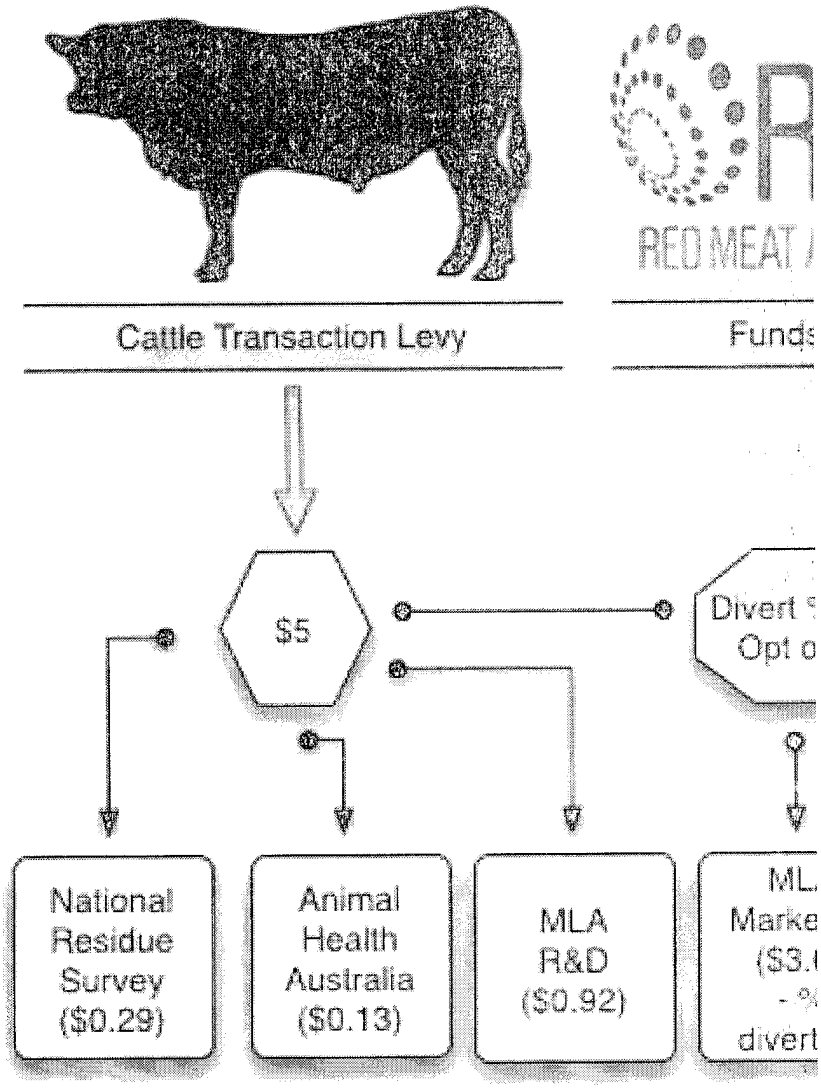


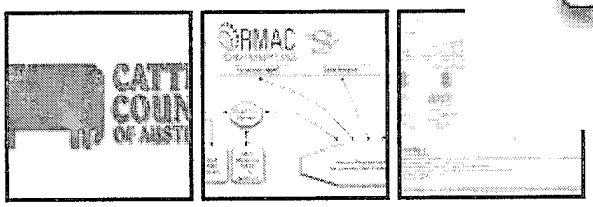

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## 1 comment

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- Grant - 25 Jan 2012
  True 'opt out' would be no levy, or at least the option of directing the % to an organisation of our choice. Double-speak at its best when you reject compulsory unionism but maintain you must join a state based farmer organisation, and pay compulsory dues. The state based farmer organisations, the cattle council, the MLA, have failed farmers, that is why we want change and membership has fallen. The free-trade, market-driven mantra of these organisations is apparently not applicable to themselves - they want statutory support! A long trough to fit all those snouts.



BEEF CENTRAL

Home 8 Apr 2013

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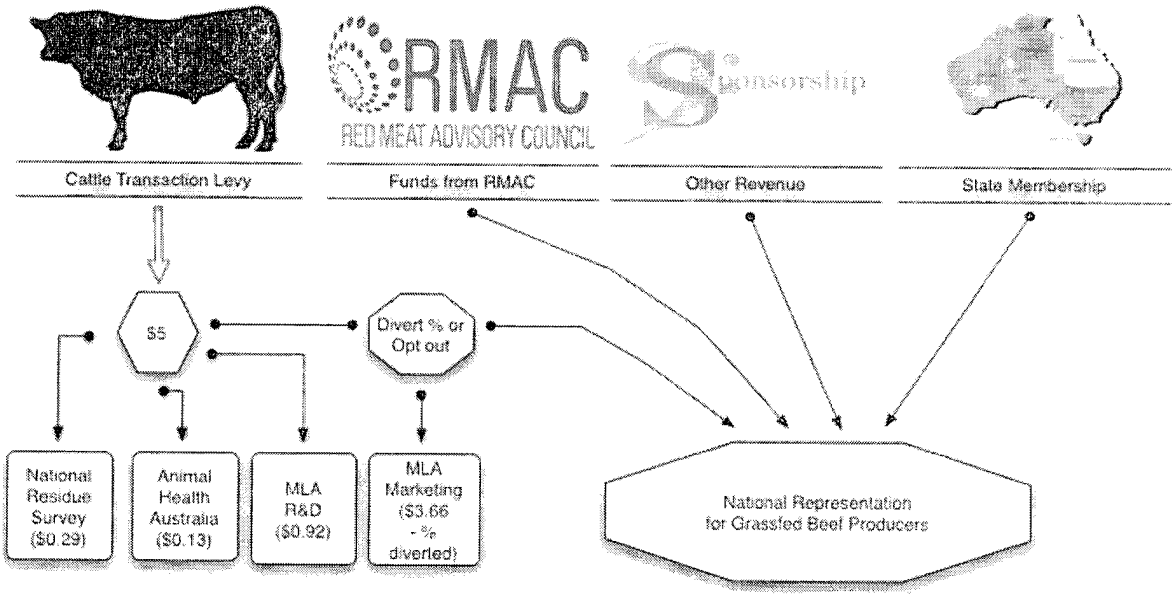


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A 2pc diversion of the $3.66/hd marketing levy would deliver Cattle Council income of $904,080 per year, 4pc $1.8m/year; 6pc $2.7m/year, 8pc $3.6m/year and 10pc $4.5m/year.

The proposed model contains a board of 12 directors, made up of one representative from each of the eight State Farm Organisations, and four representatives directly elected by all grassfed levy payers. Two of the directly elected directors would be elected by levy payers in the northern region – Qld, NT and northern WA - and two from the southern region – NSW, Vic, Tas, SA and southern WA.

Voting entitlements would be staggered according to the financial contribution and percentage of industry each organisation is responsible for. Under this system the Agforce (Queensland) director would have five votes, the NSW Farmers director would have three votes and all other directors would have one vote.

The new model offers three levels of participation – direct election to the board, direct involvement through the issues-focused sub-committees that advice the board and direct involvement at open-forum styled annual conference.

A restructure document released yesterday details the various funding, representation and structural options that Cattle Council considered in coming up with its proposed restructure model. The document can be viewed by clicking here

Cattle Council president Andrew Ogilvie said the consultation paper provided a starting point for discussion with industry stakeholders in tandem with the development of a Beef Industry Strategic Plan.

"We are not sure exactly sure where the 'landing point' is in this reform process," he said.

"However, what we are clear on is that this is a necessary discussion for Cattle Council to have with its members as well as the wider industry."

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