

government to reverse is deluding themselves as the Liberals and Nationals don't seem to run against each other in electorates any more.

The name change game should be expanded and the misnomer of the Coalition rebadged to the Liberals et al.

Interestingly, the choice of name for The Nationals is rather apt (except maybe in Western Australia) – their passive subjugation to the Liberals means they no longer represent the rural and regional communities in NSW and Australia.

I have had the luxury of having politicians like the wonderful Ted Mack, Greg Piper, Peter Draper and Tony Windsor represent me and my communities independent of party politics and factional alliances.

These were people who made choices for their own reasons and not because they were obliged to follow the leader. That is the reason they were elected.

None of them could afford the spin doctors that come up with lines like “we are trying to run it to deliver better teaching in our schools, better healthcare in our hospitals and better primary industries-related services at a lower cost to the taxpayers,” (“Stoner: Nats have delivered”).

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## MLA off the mark

DANIEL McAlary is right in asking for a weekly report on the producer share of the retail dollar for lamb as the Australian Beef Association (ABA) has for beef (“Knowledge is power”, Letters, *The Land*, March 21, p26).

The problem is whether a report from Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) is accurate.

At last year's MLA annual general meeting in Fremantle, MLA managing director Scott Hansen delivered an address stating the producer's share of the retail dollar for beef was 36 per cent.

MLA used a calculation for

determining the share based on a carcass yielding 57pc of case-ready meat.

Trials conducted by the ABA show the yield from a carcass to case-ready meat is in fact 72pc.

We filmed the cut down with independent witnesses and carefully weighed the packaged beef ready to go on retail shelves.

Using the more accurate formula, the producer's share of the retail dollar sits on 30pc.

Despite the \$170 million budget and a skills-based board, MLA seems to be unable to give an accurate producer's share of the retail dollar.

Australia falls way behind the rest of the world, with a US cattleman receiving 52pc of the consumer dollar, with the world average above 40pc.

I would suggest Mr McAlary's praise of MLA in its lamb marketing is somewhat premature.

A lift of 22pc in consumption after a marketing campaign is countered by a 40pc plus drop in consumption since MLA's inception from 18 kilograms to 10kg per person.

This drop in consumption has been driven by excessive mark-ups by the supermarkets.

As an organisation that will lobby for producers against large multinational processors and supermarkets, MLA is a dead duck.

However as a service delivery company it cannot even perform a basic function of accurately reporting the producer's share of the retail dollar once a year, let alone once a week.

I would ask those who voted against the motion to wind up MLA, why you would continue to protect this organisation.

Or after another two years of being bashed around by appalling prices would you prefer another opportunity to wind up MLA?

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