



21 November, 2019

Office of the Productivity Commissioner  
NSW Treasury  
**SYDNEY NSW 2000**

To the Productivity Commissioner,

***RE: Review of Independent Planning Commission***

The Independent Planning Commission (IPC) and its previous iterations have provided a necessary layer of independent, evidence-based scrutiny within the planning framework when significant community opposition exists to proposed developments.

It is crucial that such an agency is maintained and the functions that it performs continue to be delivered independently from other government departments. Such a model is necessary to support sound, evidence-based decision making. This ensures transparency and good governance throughout the assessment process and encourages public confidence in the NSW planning system.

New South Wales has a limited quantity of land with agricultural potential. Extractive industry and peri-urban development has contributed to the loss of large areas of productive farming land and has had significant impact on the scarce water resources needed for regional communities and food and fibre production. It is crucial for the agricultural sector, and all of us who rely upon it, that there is adequate and comprehensive consideration of the impacts of development on agriculture, communities and the environment. NSW Farmer's Association considers that the IPC has made sound, independent decisions that properly balance the full range of social, economic and environmental concerns that are at the centre of the objectives of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. The Association strongly supports the continuation of the IPC as the consent authority for referred state significant development.

The NSW Government has made it clear that they wish to encourage further mining investment in NSW. The current review of the IPC is taking place alongside a number of other policy changes that weaken protections for agriculture and the environment in the face of expanded applications for mining development. In this regard, NSW Farmers has significant concerns about the removal of the Land and Water Commissioner position. The agricultural community greatly valued the Land and Water Commissioner's role in providing guidance and advice and managing the interface between agriculture, water and mining. The Land and Water Commissioner was also able to provide leadership to ensure that mining development does not unduly impact water sources and strategically important agricultural land.

The potential displacement of both the IPC and the Land and Water Commissioner role represents a significant weakening of the agricultural and environmental voice in state significant developments. It is now more important than ever that the IPC is maintained, with unchanged scope and functions.

Yours sincerely,



**Conservation & Resource Management Chair  
NSW Farmers Association**

**NSW Farmers' Association**

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