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## Major changes tipped at MLA's AGM

Article from:

Kate Dowler | November 2, 2011

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**CATTLE industry representation is expected to come under fire at Meat and Livestock Australia's annual general meeting this month.**

The November 17 AGM at Longreach in Queensland has been tipped to be a "major catalyst for change" by outgoing [Cattle Council of Australia](#) president Greg Brown.

The Indonesian live-export debacle and management by both [MLA](#) and lobby groups, including the peak councils, have sparked widespread industry concern.

*The Weekly Times* understands moves are underway for a major restructure of CCA, which could see the organisation move to a direct membership model, instead of membership via state lobby groups that struggle to pay fees.

Calls are also expected to be made to boost CCA funds with part of the cattle transaction levy.

[Red Meat Advisory Council](#) chairman Ross Keane will chair a special 90-minute session but said it would only discuss industry policies within peak councils, not propose any structural change.

He said the public needed clearer definition of the roles of MLA, an R&D service provider, and peak councils such as CCA, which lobbied, set policy and represented industry.

He declined to comment on whether peak councils and MLA did a good job handling the live-export crisis.

MLA managing director Scott Hansen said MLA needed to get back to core business - R&D and marketing.

"We need a clearer delineation and understanding of roles of industry groups," Mr Hansen said.

"It's not MLA's responsibility to lobby - that's the role of peak councils."

Mr Hansen said MLA had "unintentionally" strayed from its core business, due to its prominence and regular contact with producers, and lessons were learned from the live-export crisis.

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"It's more effective if people involved in the trade represent themselves, rather than MLA, which is a service provider," he said.

Using levy funds to support CCA was a topic to be debated by industry, not MLA, he added.

Meanwhile, Mr Brown "hoped the debate was sensible, not ludicrous like recent AGMs".

He said CCA considered restructuring because "state organisations cannot pay their bills". Direct membership is a likely option, he said.

Mr Brown welcomed discussion about some of the levy going to cash-strapped peak councils. He said the crisis highlighted flaws in the industry's response, which "needed correcting".

"The session could be the beginning of something," he said.

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