



## Queensland Government Change & Agricultural Policy

*With the Electoral Commission of Queensland declaring the 89 seats that will make up Government late last week, a change in Queensland Government from the Liberal National Party (LNP) to the Australian Labor Party (ALP) has been confirmed.*

*In a snapshot, what are the likely impacts of a change in State Government on those operating in the Agricultural Industry in Queensland?*

### The outgoing Government's policy

The LNP's 2012 election into Government revolved around the LNP's plan to grow the State's economy under the "Four Pillar Economy" policy, with agriculture being one of these four key areas.

During their time in Government, the LNP's agriculture policy has largely focused on facilitating increased productivity as part of its strategy to double agricultural production by 2040. How successful the LNP has been at driving its policy agenda is subject to debate however during the election the LNP publicly identified the following achievements in pursuit of their agenda:

- Created a stand-alone portfolio for the Agricultural Industry.
- Undertook an agricultural land audit for informed land-use planning decisions.
- Reformed the Vegetation Management Act 1999 by introducing changes which include nine self-assessable codes, vegetation mapping changes, amendments to the clearing of regrowth vegetation notification requirements, new vegetation categories and new relevant clearing purposes.
- Increased investment in key commodities (sugar, beef, grains and tropical pulses) to increasing productivity, including flagging funding research worth \$4.05m to Sugar Research Australia. This is designed to encourage future growth in Asia.
- Travelled to Jakarta to meet with Indonesia Government ministers in

order to rebuild trade relations with Indonesia for the benefit of the Queensland Beef Industry.

- Invested in research and development, e.g. developing extension plans to improve productivity across the supply chain investing \$10m into researching the potential for utilising the alluvial floodplains of the Flinders and Gilbert rivers for crop and livestock production.
- Appointed new local management boards and college directors in Emerald and Longreach to ensure the colleges provide the appropriate practical training to meet the agricultural industry needs.
- Implemented new systems designed to manage pest and disease threats more effectively by increasing frontline staff to eradicate pests, controlling the spread of weeds in national parks and targeting the eradication of specific weeds such as the prickly acacia;
- Changed road transport regulations with the view of providing more opportunities on rail for cattle and grain and for rail upgrades, including passing loops on the Toowoomba range.
- While the above list is not exhaustive it gives a good overview of the productivity based initiatives pursued by the LNP while in government.



### The incoming Government's policy: A comparison

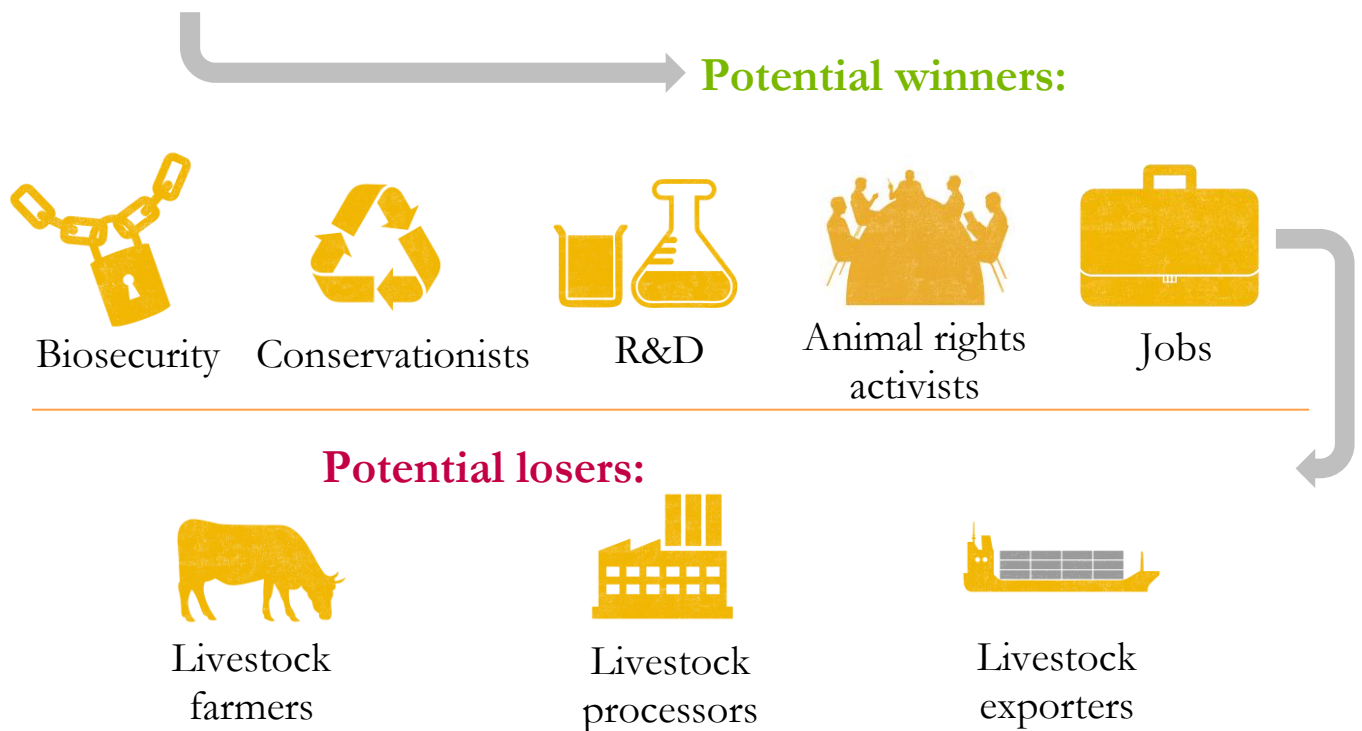
Below is a comparison between the LNP policy and the ALP's proposed plans for Queensland's agricultural industry, highlighting the differences in policies between the two major parties:

Australian Labor Party	Liberal National Party
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopting a similar policy to the LNP's existing "four pillar economy" strategy with agriculture remaining one of these pillars.</li> <li>• Increasing funding in biosecurity including more frontline staff and R&amp;D (specifically in the banana industry).</li> <li>• Increasing funding in R&amp;D – agriculture and food.</li> <li>• Establishing the Rural Job Agency to provide placement and employment opportunities within the rural sector.</li> <li>• Funding to eradicate wild dogs and cats.</li> <li>• Sanctioning a public inquiry into increased electricity costs.</li> <li>• Increasing nexus between Agriculture Training Colleges courses and sector stakeholders.</li> <li>• Establishing an Animal Welfare Advisory Board which will regulate and monitor the treatment, transportation and slaughter of farm animals and increasing resourcing to respond to disease and pest outbreaks.</li> <li>• Sponsor three annual international trade missions.</li> <li>• Increasing regulation vegetation management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining a standalone ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.</li> <li>• Doubling agricultural production by 2040 by endorsing "four key pathways to growth".</li> <li>• Securing and increasing resource availability (including water) and releasing the Queensland Agricultural Land Audit.</li> <li>• Funding in key commodities and R&amp;D (including university grants) to increase the uptake of best practice and continuing the Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation.</li> <li>• Increasing market access and foreign and private investors by streamlining regulation whilst protecting biosecurity status and food safety standards.</li> <li>• Addressing inefficiencies across the supply chain via the implementation of electricity, waste, and transport infrastructure strategies.</li> </ul>
<p><i>In summary</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ALP has pledged to support the Agricultural sector via increased focus on R&amp;D, biosecurity and rural jobs</li> <li>• The ALP has undertaken to place a greater focus on animal welfare and environmental issues via an increase in the regulatory framework that industry participants must navigate</li> </ul>	<p><i>In summary</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The LNP was going to continue to focus on policies designed to foster an increase in agricultural productivity</li> <li>• The LNP was focused on a "more of same approach" designed to drive productivity and reduce red tape with little in the way of new policies for rural Queensland</li> </ul>



# *Does a change in Queensland Government affect your business?*

## Who is impacted by the ALP gaining power?



## Food for thought:

- At a time when Queensland agriculture is faced with significant opportunities as a result of the increasing demand for our agricultural production in Asia and the outcomes of recent FTA's with China, Japan and South Korea, it remains to be seen how the ALP will balance the implementation of its animal welfare and environmental policies without constraining the potential for growth
- The new Agriculture Minister Mr Bill Byrne will need to balance sufficient time and resources to agricultural issues whilst also being responsible for the sport and racing portfolios
- The ALP brings key new policy initiatives designed to support agriculture in relation to R&D, electricity, rural jobs, biosecurity and wild pest eradication which have the potential to provide material benefits for producers. Will stakeholders seize the opportunities the aforementioned initiative present to the agriculture industry?
- Although the LNP has indicated it will not pursue a legal challenge to the Ferny Grove result, the potential of the ALP losing a seat to the LNP in a by election highlighted the pivotal role the Katter's Australian Party (KAP) could play in changing Queensland's political landscape. Specifically, garnering the KAP's support with their two seats could become critical for the ALP to remain in Government or for the LNP to gain power if a by election is to occur sometime in the future. How would the KAP's support be achieved?

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