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1995 a year of change and challenge

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A year of change and challenge

The Government's new approach to supporting Western Australia's $4.3 billion agricultural sector has paved the way for a more dynamic and innovative delivery of services to primary producers and rural communities, according to Agriculture Western Australia's Chief Executive Officer Graeme Robertson.

Throughout 1995 there have been major changes to the delivery of government services to agriculture in Western Australia.

The key to these changes has been the integration of the Department of Agriculture, the Agriculture Protection Board and the Rural Adjustment and Finance Corporation to form the single agency, Agriculture Western Australia.

This has meant the appointment of a new executive team and the development of a new program structure to ensure we can provide the most effective and efficient support services possible to match the increasing professionalism of the agricultural sector.

The agency's new executive has an extensive range of experience, and a mix of new and existing agency expertise. The executive team will guide Agriculture Western Australia's transition to a more commercial way of doing business.

Earlier this year we welcomed to the executive:

- **Ken Moore** to lead the new Office of Policy and Planning - a small dynamic unit which will set the agency's funding priorities and strengthen its capacity for policy development and strategic planning in the medium and longer-term.
- **John Lightfoot** as Executive Director of Program Services - the area responsible for matching the skills-base of the organisation to its program outcomes and providing the staff, skills and infrastructure to the programs. The Program Services team will also be responsible for ensuring appropriate training and technical and professional development for staff.
- **Ian Longson** as Executive Director of Program Coordination who will ensure the activities of the agencies are coordinated to maximise outcomes at farm, regional and industry level.
- **Roger O'Dwyer** to lead the new Industry Resource Protection Program which will deliver an integrated protection program under the guidance of a revamped Agriculture Protection Board. A key task for the IRP team will be to ensure that Western Australia maintains its competitive advantage as a supplier of 'clean and green' products.
- **Kevin Goss** to lead the new Sustainable Rural Development Program which will bring together the Soil and Land Conservation Council, the Rural Adjustment and Finance Corporation and a range of sustainable agriculture activities such as support for land use planning and integrated catchment management, and the coordination of regional development strategies.
- **Ingrid Sims** as General Manager of Corporate Services which will be responsible for corporate and administrative support throughout the agency, including the implementation of a new financial management system.

Along with the introduction of modern business practices, we have also remained on target to develop stronger partnerships with industry, build a strong market-focus to research and development, encourage a commitment to sustainable development of agricultural production and land use, and protect industry from exotic pests and diseases.

At the same time we have continued to move towards achieving a regionalised organisation which more fully reflects our commitment to the industries we support.
Two of the executive directors positions will be located in regional centres – the Sustainable Rural Development position will be located in Northam and Industry Resource Protection position in Bunbury.

Likewise, a number of our new industry program managers will also be based in regional centres:

**Trade and market development**
Gary Stokes (Perth)

**Cereals**
Steve Trevenen (Northam)

**Wool**
Rob Kelly (Albany)

**Pulses and oilseeds**
Rob Delane (Geraldton)

**Horticulture**
Terry Hill (Bunbury)

**Meat**
Renata Paliskis (Albany)

**Dairy and other animal products**
Geoff de Chaneet (Bunbury)

**New industries**
Brian Stynes (Perth)

The activities of the programs will be carried out across the State and will assist our agricultural industries to continually improve in the areas of products and quality; export and new market opportunities; improving productivity, profitability and sustainability; identifying opportunities for post-farm gate industries and processing; making better use of resources; and integrating new enterprises and technology into sustainable farming systems.

To achieve these aims, Agriculture Western Australia is strengthening its partnerships with industry to allow a more comprehensive and fruitful contribution to priority setting in the agency. New industry partnership groups will provide vital experience and skills to help the program managers focus program activities.

The changes result from the most comprehensive review ever made of government services to agriculture - the Agriculture Portfolio Review conducted last year. The end result will be to ensure that Agriculture Western Australia delivers the best services possible to the State's expanding $4 billion agricultural sector.

Graeme Robertson
Chief Executive Officer