

LCommitteePTCS@parliament.act.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am providing this Expression of Interest (EOI) for Committee Members of the ACT Rural Landholders Association of Farmers (ACT Farmers) to appear before the Committee.

The ACT Farmers is the peak body for primary producers in the ACT. Farmers manage around 15% of the Territory's land, the same land directly affected by Canberra's growth. As a critical stakeholder, we request equitable representation for the 15% of ACT and non-urban invitees to provide feedback.

ACT Farmers previously submitted their concerns regarding the lack of certainty for agriculture, particularly in peri-urban areas, as part of the District Strategies in the Territory Plan. In December 2022, the Association participated in the public hearing for the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services Inquiry into Planning Bill 2022.

Since then, the ACT Government's Draft Canberra Region Local Food Strategy 2023-28 (Food Strategy) has been released for comment, and the Territory Plan has been released, effective from 27 November 2023.

The new Territory Plan includes zones and specifications for farming lands, which need to be sufficiently consulted upon. The new Territory Plan also has implications for leases and lease administration, affecting the lives and businesses of all ACT farmers.

The ACT Farmers welcome the Food Strategy as it recognises the importance of agriculture in the ACT. The ACT Farmers request the opportunity to prosecute the case for changes to the new Territory Plan regarding what is now referred to solely as non-urban lands.

The ACT Farmers appreciate the opportunity to appear at the Legislative Assembly Committee hearings. They believe that the proposed changes are crucial for the agricultural business sector, the future of food security in the Territory, and the look and feel of our National Capital.

Yours sincerely,

Frederick McGrath Weber

ACT Rural Landholders Association of Farmers