



## MEDIA RELEASE - FREE Eyre

# Farmer group FREE Eyre Ltd scoping meat value adding opportunities for the Eyre Peninsula

International food value chain expert and SA Thinker in Residence, Professor Andrew Fearne, will be the keynote speaker and facilitator at significant FREE Eyre meeting open to all Eyre Peninsula sheepmeat and beef producers to be held at the Wudinna Community Centre this Friday the 19<sup>th</sup> September from 1pm to 5pm.

Professor Fearne is a food value chain expert from the United Kingdom and is South Australia's current Thinker in Residence. Meat & Livestock Australia's (MLA) Manager - Innovation and Capability Building, Mr Sean Starling, will provide an insight into historical and future meat market trends, as well as the successes and tribulations of other meat groups and what we can learn from them.

Local producers have helped to provide a detailed profile of production and meat finishing activities on Eyre Peninsula by completing surveys over the last few weeks. FREE Eyre's Managing Director, Ms Susi Tegen, is looking forward to presenting the results of the surveys as it is the beginning of a significant process for local meat producers.

The results of the farmer surveys which will reflect what currently occurs in the Eyre Peninsula, Meat and Livestock Australia's research and Andrew Fearne's international experience will be the start of a consumer driven feasibility process.

"We are very fortunate to have Andrew Fearne meet farmers at Wudinna. He will share global trends and consumer demand with farmers, information on how primary producers and the food industry have responded and remained competitive", said FREE Eyre Managing Director Susi Tegen.

"Now that we have the first FREE Eyre business EP Grain joint venture up and running, the second priority raised by farmers was the exploration of feasible and profitable meat opportunities for the Eyre Peninsula. There are some opportunities to look at niche markets locally and/or internationally by meeting consumer demand as a consistent group.

The meeting is an important step in a program to generate greater value to farmers from their livestock production enterprises and we encourage as many farmers to attend as possible, said Ms Tegen

FREE Eyre appreciates the collaboration and funding support by Meat & Livestock Australia, Primary Industries SA, the Eyre Regional Development Board, the Office of the SA Thinker in Residence and Rural Solutions SA.

Agreement has been reached to look at an Eyre Peninsula meat value adding business. The business development process will cover topics including market consumer demands, logistics, costs, (e.g. export vs. domestic markets) channels, and partners.

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This will provide market opportunities, costed options for Eyre Peninsula and strategies and actions for FREE Eyre and the region.

FREE Eyre members Andrew Polkinghorne (Penong) and Mr Ben Ranford, (Cleve) have provided considerable regional insight into production on Eyre Peninsula.

Ranford is a current Nuffield Scholar and is researching meat value adding opportunities in Asia and Europe. Andrew Polkinghorne was member of the FREE Eyre Steering and Committee and is a respected member of the West Coast farming community.

I strongly believes that FREE Eyre is one of the best ways farmers can work together for a profitable farming future”, said Ben Ranford.

“FREE Eyre provides producers scale and a means to niche market, to brand, to operate QA, to counter the tyranny of distance improve control over input costs, whether producing grain, meat or other products”, said Susi Tegen.

FREE Eyre has added another 75 farmers as shareholders over the last few months bringing its membership up considerably, providing farmers with scale and opportunities and the ability to set up businesses that individual farmers may not be able to on their own.

Producers can register for the Workshop on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September via phone 8311 7110 fax 8232 3499 or email info@free-eyre.com.au

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[www.free-eyre.com.au](http://www.free-eyre.com.au)

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