

This looks very much like another new state tax on primary producers, and worse still, a new LNP tax being introduced through the back door.

The way this whole issue of DAFF fees for property registration is being handled, via the new biosecurity bill, lacks transparency.

However, with the way that Dr McVeigh went about closing the Toowoomba Veterinary Laboratory in early 2013, it seems that lack of transparency in handling his DAFF ministry is a part of his normal method of operation.

Producers may be well advised not to expect too much of Mr Rickuss as AERC chairman, when this committee investigates DAFF's biosecurity bill.

In his QCL column of January 23, QDO president Brian Tessman took Mr Rickuss to task for his AERC inquiry into the "Fair Milk Mark Bill". Mr Rickuss, in his AERC chairman's report, came out on the side of Woolworths and Coles with their \$1 a litre milk pricing, which is driving many dairy farmers out of business.

In a parody of the January 26 Australia Day awards, Mr Tessman gave Mr Rickuss the award for "the most damaging own goal", which is for the one who most deliberately and enthusiastically kicked one for the other side (Coles and Woolworths).

Maybe Dr McVeigh can enlighten both QCL readers and Queensland property owners on the proposed new fees.

Maybe the proposed fees for property registration are not another new LNP state government tax after all, just like the recent new fire levy imposed by the state government via council rate notices?

— **John Cronin, ex-DAFF veterinarian, Toowoomba.**

Water drilling: the facts

WITH regard to the asbestos being found in drilling mud, I find it very disappointing and irresponsible that Mayor Ray Brown finds a need to place the water drilling industry under the same umbrella as the CSG drilling industry with his statement "the same mud is used in many water bore drills".

The drilling mud additive in question is 'nutplug' consisting of mainly ground walnut shells used in the drilling process to stop lost circulation.

This is where the mud is lost to porous formations. Whereas this product and others similar are freely available to all in the drilling industry, it is not favoured by most water drillers as they tend to block the aquifers and make it difficult to develop a bore to its full potential.

I have drilled water bores within the artesian basin of Queensland for more than 36 years and have never had the need to use these products in any of the formations within the GAB.

Also with current restrictions on town water supplies after major flooding in the recent past, and a moratorium stopping townspeople drilling bores to supply their own water, people are becoming increasingly frustrated watching millions of litres of precious ground water from CSG production being wasted in evaporation ponds.

This is after the original big sales pitch by the CSG industry that there would be abundant water for industry, urban and some agriculture needs.

With Origin applying for 100m/l of allocation a year from the Huttons to supply their power station and Miles being granted 800m/l a year from the Precipice sandstone, would it not be more beneficial to first utilise the CSG water rather than placing only more pressure on our ground water supplies?

Could Mr Brown, as mayor of the Western Downs and also a Gasfields commissioner, please explain why CSG water isn't being used.

Is it because of CSG companies demanding cheaper options, or because the quality of the water can't be guaranteed or because consistent volumes can't be supplied?

Why is it necessary for the CSG drilling industry to use lost circulation products, such as 'nutplug', when water drillers have been able to construct water bores in these same formations without it.

I find it very disappointing that Mr Brown sees the need to try to involve the water drilling industry in this issue. — **Ian Hansen, Oakdale, Dalby.**