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Agricultural machinery industry unites on ‘Right to Repair’

Members of the Tractor and Machinery Association of Australia (TMA) today released the first Statement of Principles outlining their support for farmers to repair their own machinery.

The Statement of Principles clearly sets out agricultural manufacturers and importers' support for Australian farmers' ability to maintain and repair their own machinery.

“Our members are committed to supporting farmers through provision of high quality and safe agricultural machinery that reduces downtime, maximises productivity and minimises environmental impact,” said Executive Director of the TMA, Gary Northover.

“That includes providing farmers and repairers with training, diagnostic information and support, plus information on service, parts, operation and safety. The Statement of Principles reinforces the industry’s commitment to industry changes that improve machinery without adding additional cost or putting safety, performance or environmental standards at risk.

"However, recent inquiries into the agricultural machinery market and 'right to repair' have made recommendations that will have far-reaching unintended consequences for the industry and more particularly for rural and regional Australia.”

On 4 May 2021 the ACCC released its report into the agricultural machinery market, and following that the Productivity Commission released its draft report into Right to Repair.

"Agricultural machinery is often highly complex and requires extensive training and experience to repair or service.

"These recommendations will have unintended consequences for the Australian agriculture industry by creating safety, warranty, and environmental concerns that will affect dealers and their customers.

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“We support the right for farmers to carry out their own repairs or maintenance, but that does not mean a right to modify. These machines are often complex and set up to operate safely while optimising performance. Modifying them creates significant safety risks,” said Mr Northover.

“In addition, agricultural machinery and tractor dealerships operate all over Australia, largely in rural, regional and remote areas. These dealerships are a crucial part of their local economies, as employers, providers of traineeships and education, supporters of community initiatives.

“If the recommendations from the ACCC and Productivity Commission are implemented in their current form, we are concerned repairs will be made by people who don’t have the required training and may result in machines not being fixed correctly the first time. That can in turn lead to increased downtime and other breakdowns, which create knock on effects that can be expensive to remedy.

“We urge the ACCC and Productivity Commission to work with our industry to develop workable solutions that won’t create safety, warranty or environmental issues, or adversely affect rural communities.”

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The Tractor and Machinery Association of Australia (TMA) represents importers, manufacturers and sellers of agricultural tractors and machinery in Australia. Established over 70 years ago, the TMA is the industry's voice on issues relating to safety, training, regulation and market statistics. For more information please visit our website www.tma.asn.au