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Dairy farmers to benefit from \$8.1 million ACCC boost

For Immediate Release

A new specialist tasked with looking solely at dairy industry claims to work within the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has been welcomed by the country's peak dairy farmer group.

Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) today congratulated federal agriculture minister Bridget McKenzie on her commitment to delivering on a \$22 million election pledge to benefit the dairy industry, including the creation of the new dairy specialist role and an \$8.1 million budget extension for the competition watchdog's agriculture unit.

"Minister McKenzie must be commended for acting quickly on the government's election promises," ADF President Terry Richardson said.

As part of the arrangement, a new Dairy Consultative Committee will be established to help enforce the industry's new mandatory code of conduct.

Mr Richardson said the committee must be given the power to test all claims relating to the mandatory code.

"We believe the committee should focus on the code of conduct and other matters that fall under the remit of the ACCC. This includes acting on all complaints that are brought forward," Mr Richardson said.

"The ACCC uses a public benefit test to determine which claims it pursues, but in our view this threshold is likely too high for many of the claims potentially breaching the code."

Mr Richardson welcomed the \$8.1 million funding boost for the ACCC agriculture unit, a significant boost to the \$2.7 million outlined in the 2020 budget.

"The Coalition's commitment to ensure continued funding of the ACCC's agriculture unit is a timely and welcome announcement," he said.

"This will ensure that the mandatory code of conduct is appropriately resourced, and the decision to appoint a dedicated dairy industry specialist within that unit is an important step in the process."

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) is currently drafting the code of conduct following two rounds of consultation. A third round will take place once the draft code is released to gain further feedback.

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