

## Farmers' Market

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# Floods are a wake-up call

WHAT a New Year it has been. Recent floods and cyclones have once again brought home to us the fragile hold we have on this amazing country of ours. After an eight year drought, we were just beginning to feel some sense of security with a season that promised bumper harvests. Then the deluge began, drowning whole towns and destroying valuable hectares of prime agricultural crops.

In times like these, sustainability – a word bandied around a lot these days – takes on real meaning. Sustainability (the ability to sustain life without putting future generations at risk) requires us to learn from the past and imagine a future where short-term gains for a few are not put before the long-term interests of many.

One idea that I have discussed previously is Professor Randy Stringer's proposal to link some of the wine regions of the State in a collective bid for World Heritage status. For most of last year, he and his team toured the regions putting the idea to local councils. Last week the councillors of the City of Onkaparinga voted to contribute funds to the preparation of a feasibility study for such a bid. Their contribution was dependant on other councils doing the same, but nevertheless it was an important first step and the City of Onkaparinga should be congratulated for its leadership.

The regions involved in the bid (Barossa and Clare Valleys, Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu) produce and supply much of our food and wine for both local consumption and export.

A World Heritage listing would not only assist the development of regional food and tourism businesses – thus boosting returns to farmers – but would also contribute to the preservation of regional agricultural land currently under pressure from government and developers for broadacre housing development. These are the same kind of developments that are now suspected of assisting Queensland floodwater take on the power of an inland tsunami as it rolled over bitumen and concrete, gathering volume, speed and power and leaving devastation in its wake.

These natural disasters also show how necessary it is to have our food-producing areas spread all over the country so that when one area is under threat, there is a good chance another will be able to supply the food needs of the population.

Floods and landslides in Asia have resulted in food security becoming the number one issue for governments the world over.

At a local level it becomes even more important for us to be able to grow what food we can wherever and whenever we can. We also need a National Food Policy strategy that will ensure each generation is handed down the skills and knowledge of how to do so.

Cities are beginning to understand their role in this process and are starting to think seriously about how urban gardens and food landscapes can be incorporated into city life.

This year the Adelaide Showground Farmers Market will work with local partners Goodwood Community Bank, Goodwood Primary School and Unley Council to support the growth of the Goodwood Primary School Community Garden project. We will also continue to grow our own garden as part of our Kids' Club program and we plan to build the relationships between our producers and customers by linking market farmers directly with schools through an 'adopt a farm' program.

So far this year we have had record member numbers and weekly customer counts indicating there is no letup in the level of support for South Australian producers. Let's hope the people of Queensland have the opportunity to support their farmers by buying direct from markets, roadside stalls or farm-gates to help them through these crises.

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