

Farmers rally against 'heavy-handed' NRM

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ANGER BOILS OVER: Fleurieu Peninsula farmers are angry over what they say are excessive NRM powers. From left Darryl Robertson, John and Athalie Lock, Doris Lush, Peter Blesing, Jill Hagemann, Tony Willsmore, Ed Ashby, Don, Stephanie and Mark Blesing and Rod Steinert are hoping between 2000 and 3000 people will attend the Victor Harbor rally.

FLEURIEU Peninsula and Adelaide Hills farmers have banded together to fight what they believe is heavy-handed actions by natural resource management boards that affects their right to farm.

And they are urging landholders across the State with similar concerns to attend a rally at Victor Harbor on October 30.

The Food Producers and Land Action Group of SA is a community group formed as a result of concerns about the government's draft Mount Lofty Ranges Water Allocation Plan and the effect it would have on sustainable food production in South Australia.

A meeting organised by FLAGSA about water issues at Strathalbyn in March attracted more than 1000 people.

FLAGSA spokesperson Peter Manuel said the fight went much deeper than just water rights.

Mr Manuel said the Rally for your Rights event was meant to send a clear message to government.

"We've had a gut-full of government bureaucracy and natural resource madness," he said.

Mr Manuel, a Strathalbyn beef cattle producer and stud owner, said the NRM Act of 2004 needed a complete overhaul.

"I'm worried about the NRM being able to dictate my stocking rates and grazing rates," he said.

"Say my stud had 20 breeders which was more than the DSE I was allowed, but there was nothing wrong with them.

"The NRM can tell me to get rid of them, even if the animals are in good condition, which is absolute lunacy."

Mr Manuel said he was hoping to get between 2000 and 3000 people to the rally.

Inman Valley beef cattle producer Rod Steinert said hundreds of farmers were affected by NRM powers.

"As a result of the Act, NRM compliance officers have more powers than SAPOL," he said.

"They have so much power. They can come onto your property any time they like and take your paperwork, just like the Australian Taxation Office, it's just ridiculous powers."