

Header insurance Working Group Forms.

Grain Producers Australia (GPA) says reports of insurance no longer being available to contract harvesters due to fire risk are exaggerated, following a meeting between GPA's Grains Policy Council, GRDC, Australian Custom Harvesters (ACH) and representatives of major insurance providers to explore the issue.

GPA president Andrew Weidemann said the clear message was that insurance continues to be available for contractors and growers, regardless of whether they are harvesting cereals, oilseeds, pulses or any other grain crop.

"It's a highly competitive space in respect of both premiums and product offerings and the clear message was that insurers are prepared to work with clients, or potential clients, to meet their needs", Mr Weidemann said.

"Header fires are an extremely serious issue for all involved, which in worst case scenarios can be many people far beyond the initial ignition point and is why all people working in harvest operations should know about and use all appropriate strategies to avoid or contain fires.

"In the event a fire does occur though, you want to know that insurance is there to help the recovery and all the insurers who met with us emphasised the long term nature of their businesses, which seek a balance over many years.

"It was recognised that last harvest produced enormous volumes of grain and in many areas went for an extended period, but the events of one season do not necessarily mean a change of direction for insurance.

"Australian Custom Harvesters, which was previously known as the Australian Grain Harvesters Association, explained to us the steps taken by professional operators to manage fire risks and discussed the operational and business challenges they face.

"GRDC emphasised that considerable research work is already available on many aspects of crop fires including key risk factors and mitigation, with modern monitoring and communication technology offering growers and contractors much greater scope to manage the issues than in years past.

"Even so, all agreed that there were opportunities to work together to both ensure existing information is well understood and identify additional research topics.

"With the agreement of all parties GPA has undertaken to form a working group with farming representatives, insurers, ACH representatives and researchers to identify key research issues and to guide and prioritise that research, as well as helping information flow to where it is needed.

"In the meantime the very clear message from the insurers is it is 'business as usual' – each farming or harvesting business wanting insurance presents a different situation, claims history and risk analysis, so the opportunity is there for anyone with concerns to talk to one or more insurance providers, both about what products may be offered and what they individually do to minimise and manage fire risk", Mr Weidemann said.

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For further information please contact:

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About Grain Producers Australia: Grain Producers Australia (GPA) represents Australia's broadacre, grain, pulse and oilseed producers at the national level. Broadly stated, GPA exists to foster a strong, innovative, profitable, globally competitive and environmentally sustainable grains industry in Australia.