

PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

MEDIA RELEASE

Drought Review Panel

13th November 2003

Independent Member for Tamworth Peter Draper has welcomed the establishment of a Federal Government Panel to review current drought relief arrangements.

University of Queensland academic Beth Woods will head the panel.

“Federal Minister for Agriculture Warren Truss has been promising for some time to review drought relief arrangements. It is very welcome indeed to see him keeping that promise,” Mr Draper said.

“This drought is far from over and now is the best time to investigate what we can do better next time around. Farmers have had a tough time accessing relief in recent months.”

“Landholders have said that accessing Government drought relief is too hard. We need to simplify the process to ensure farmers get the help they need when they need it, rather than months afterwards.”

“The Exceptional Circumstances drought relief offered by the Federal Government is a great package but the application process is too long and cumbersome. Several farmers have said to me that they would be better off now if they could have accessed EC sooner.”

“I am concerned that no representatives from NSW are on this panel. We have more farmers than any other state and more stories to tell.”

“This panel has a long and difficult task ahead of them. Because of the nature of drought, it will not be easy to find a system that meets the needs of all farmers and businesses.”

“I would encourage anyone within the electorate of Tamworth who wants to share their concerns or make suggestions to improve the current scheme to contact my office.”

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