

7 June 2010

OPEN LETTER TO MEMBERS OF THE NSW PARLIAMENT

State Budget must support food security

The NSW Farmers' Association (the Association) wishes to highlight the need for significant funding increases to enhance the food producing capacity of NSW, as well as supporting regional and rural NSW in tomorrow's 2010-11 NSW State Budget.

Presently, every Australian farmer feeds 600 people every year; 150 domestically and 450 overseas (Australian Farm Institute). The United Nations has also called for an increase in global food production by 70 per cent by 2050 to continue to feed the world and avoid another food crisis. Important decisions need to be made **now** to ensure NSW farmers are able to meet this demand. Food security is an imperative that must be addressed in this Budget.

The Association has highlighted a number of policy initiatives to meet the food crisis challenge. These include:

- Increased investment in agricultural Research Development and Extension (R, D & E) services to support better farming systems. Specifically an increase in funding for R, D & E services within the Department of Industry and Investment.
- Improved infrastructure to enable farmers to remain price competitive in the international market. Specifically, the Association is seeking the Government to honour its response to the NSW Grain Freight Review; funding to progress the development of the Inland Rail Corridor between Brisbane and Melbourne; and investment in rural and regional road infrastructure.
- Increased investment in regional services such as health, education, telecommunications and emergency services, which are all necessary to support rural communities, and improved certainty in State Government drought support measures.

Strengthening our food production capacity will offer an opportunity for NSW to capitalise on its farming capacity through potential high export prices. It also places a moral responsibility on the Government of NSW to contribute to feeding an expanding global population. These opportunities can be realised by State Government action to support the farming sector in the 2010-11 State Budget.

For your information, please find attached a summary of the Association's Budget submission. Association representatives will be attending tomorrow's Budget lock-up and the Association's President, Charles Armstrong, will be available at the NSW Parliament to discuss the Budget outcomes, should you wish to meet with him. In that regard, please do not hesitate to contact me on 02 8251 1802 to arrange a suitable time.

Yours sincerely

Shaughn Morgan
CHIEF EXECUTIVE