

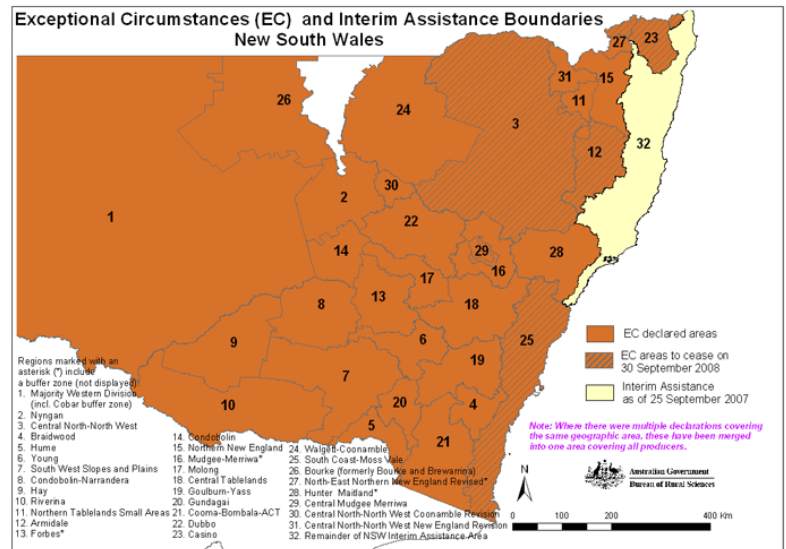
Issue

The August 2008 drought figures indicate a continued worsening in conditions, with 66.2% of the state now 'in drought' (up from 60% in June 2008), with a further 18.5% of the state considered 'marginal'. It should be noted that only 15.3% of the state is considered 'satisfactory' from a climate perspective, down dramatically from the 45.6% reported in April. . With so much of the state still in drought, the announced continuation of many EC declared areas until 31 March 2009 will allow for a comprehensive assessment of the current winter harvest.

Current EC Status

- The map (right) illustrates in brown the areas of NSW that are currently EC-declared.
- With the exception of Bourke/Brewarrina (26), which was revised in June 2008 and Hunter Maitland (28), which is due to expire 31 March 2009, all other EC-declared areas of NSW were due to expire 30 September 2008.
- The Bourke/Brewarrina EC declaration was reviewed by the National Rural Advisory Council prior to its scheduled 15 June 2008 expiry, with the boundary revised 13 June 2008 to allow a 12-month extension of the EC declaration for the Bourke Rural Lands Protection Board area only.
- The Federal government announced on 19 August that of the remaining 26 areas of NSW due to expire on 30 September the following areas would have their EC status rolled over until 31 March 2009.

Braidwood;	Dubbo;	North-East Northern New England revised;
Central Tablelands;	Forbes;	Northern Tablelands Small Areas;
Central North North-West	Goulburn-Yass;	Nyngan;
Coonamble revision;	Gundagai;	Riverina;
Central North North-West	Hay;	South West Slopes and Plains;
Northern New England	Hume;	Walgett-Coonamble;
revision;	Majority Western Division;	Young
Condobolin;	Molong;	
Condobolin-Narrandera;	Mudgee-Merriwa;	
Cooma-Bombala-ACT;	Northern New England;	
- The remaining areas of Armidale, Casino and South Coast-Moss Vale were assessed as having a sustainable recovery commencing and therefore EC assistance would not be continued beyond 30 September.



NRAC Tours

- The National Rural Advisory Council (NRAC) is a skills-based independent advisory council to the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. As part of the EC review process, NRAC assesses information from a number of data sources, State and Local Governments and local producers.
- In the case of NSW, the Association works closely with the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) to provide local drought area information to NRAC through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
- NRAC inspected the New England, Central tablelands, Walgett-Coonamble, and Braidwood areas in the lead-up to the scheduled expiry of EC declarations in September 2008.