

Dear Members,



We begin today with the sobering news that despite heavy rain in coastal areas, the latest Government figures reveal 67.7% of NSW is now drought declared (up from 65.9%). Weather in the last few weeks has been all over the place, with parts of NSW experiencing dust storms, failed crops and heavy losses and others receiving heavy rain, gale force winds and even ice and snow. In terms of the ongoing drought, 27.4% of NSW is considered marginal (up from 24.3%) and 4.9% satisfactory (down from 9.8%).

We, of course, are taking that on board and are trying to meet with as many people as we can, to discuss what is going to be the best way to handle what will be a lot of pressure on farmers for the next few months. We are of course particularly concerned about the south of the State, and understand just how difficult it is for many. Next week your Executive Council meets in Sydney, and this will be a very good opportunity for these discussions to continue, and action decided upon. The Council will also be considering the report from the Livestock Health and Pest Authority Taskforce which was established at the Annual Conference.

This meeting will also be a good opportunity to ensure city media understands the situation. I am particularly pleased that we are holding the Mackellar Media Awards on the Tuesday night, as this will provide us with an excellent opportunity to brief a large group of media professionals. These awards are very important in terms of our ongoing relationship with media, and our brand recognition statewide.

I am attending a large number meetings at the moment – there is a lot going on. But one issue I really want to highlight is that of the State Governments Rail Trail Bill due to be debated when parliament resumes on October 20. We are really pushing to make sure the debate on this issue remains current while politicians are making up their minds on this issue. We will be sending an open letter to all NSW politicians in the coming week. We will also be printing this letter in Thursday's edition of the Land, and you can hear the Chief Executive Shaughn Morgan discuss it in this week's Primary Report, which you can download [here](#).

I see this issue as being of significant importance for our Members, as it not only threatens rail branch lines, but it also has the potential to open up our lands to rail trails, about which we have many concerns. I am confident our efforts will be worthwhile – watch out for my upcoming YouTube video to find out more. You can also check out my latest video [here](#).

On the topic of videos, I would also encourage you to head [here](#) to check out a copy of Monday's Channel Ten News story on our Farmer of the Year, Michael O'Brien, and Young Farmers of the Year Stephen and Amity Chase. It is fantastic to see such a positive news story in the mainstream city press.

Until next time,  
Charlie Armstrong

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