

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2007



NEWS

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Drought Assistance still needed

Federal and State Government drought assistance must be extended according to more than 450 farmers at the NSW Farmers Association's Annual conference this week.

Conference delegates further reinforced the impact of the lingering drought despite recent rains, calling for an extension of interest rate relief until at least 2010.

Association President Jock Laurie said Exceptional Circumstances Interest Rate Subsidies are vitally important to farm businesses facing their fourth, fifth and even sixth year of drought.

"With borrowings increasing dramatically in some cases as the drought continues, the Association will seek to ensure that interest rate subsidies are made available beyond the end of this drought," Mr Laurie said.

"It must be remembered that more than 90% of NSW remains drought-affected and the need for financial assistance has not diminished.

Mr Laurie said Conference delegates also recommended that the off-farm asset test be raised to a level not exceeding 50% of the value of farm assets

"The off-farm test for Exceptional Circumstances can limit larger-scale farm families from accessing this important assistance," Jock Laurie said.

The Association will also seek a 50% rate subsidy for farmland rates in drought areas and will continue to work with Local Government and Shires Association to gain the support of the NSW Government.

"Similar rebates are already in place in other states such as Victoria," Mr Laurie said.

The Association will also request that the State Government scrutinize the current guidelines for drought declarations in coastal areas to ensure that speedy responses can be made to the often dramatic changes in weather conditions in coastal areas.

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NSW Farmers' Association Annual Conference will be webcast from 8:30am – 5:30pm Tuesday 17 to Thursday 19 July 2007. Visit www.nswfarmers.org.au for details

Fast Fact: