

Friday 27 February 2009

PR/028/09

## **EC funding deadline: Northern New England residents discuss support**

The NSW Farmers' Association's Deepwater Branch is hosting a public meeting next week to discuss Exceptional Circumstances (EC) drought assistance, due to expire in the region at the end of next month.

Eight regions and four revised regions were excluded from the recently announced rollover of EC funding across NSW, including the Northern New England region.

NSW Farmers' Association Deepwater Branch Chair John Chappell says the meeting, to be held on Wednesday 4 March, will gauge the support for the extension of EC from the current deadline of 31 March 2009.

"There are many people who are concerned that our region has missed out and this meeting will be a chance for those concerns to be discussed," Mr Chappell said.

"We are canvassing the farmers and small business operators in the local region affected by this decision to see if there is sufficient evidence to launch an appeal against the rollover of funds," Mr Chappell said.

The NSW Farmers' Association has asked Members who have concerns about the announcement and EC declared areas to contact the Association's regional service managers.

"The feedback we have been hearing has prompted the Deepwater Branch to call this meeting as we believe it's very important for all people to have their say on this subject," Mr Chappell said.

"I strongly urge everyone who is concerned about this decision to come along to the meeting and ensure our region continues to be supported," Mr Chappell said.

The Association encourages all farmers with questions regarding their support status to either contact the Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593, Centrelink on 132 316 or the Association on 1300 794 000.

The public meeting is being held at the Top Pub in Deepwater on Wednesday 4 March, commencing at 7pm.

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