

Dear Members



My travels in the last fortnight have been extensive. I have visited Bega, Bombala, Cooma, Tumut, Holbrook, Bungendore and Henty over the last week, and Garah, Moree and Cobar the week before.

Topics for discussion with Members have included our property rights campaign, the Mining Bill and, this week, drought reform.

In terms of property rights, our policy staff have been hard at work developing extensive case studies to highlight this problem, both to the media and other champions. Our plan is to run this issue both politically and in the hearts and minds of Australians. We are also developing the structure of a grassroots campaign that I hope to be able to tell you more about in coming weeks.

I believe our property rights campaign received support from the Senate Report into Native Vegetation Laws, Greenhouse Gas Abatement and Climate Change Measures. This report confirmed most of our concerns about the erosion of our property rights, and called for greater investigation into the laws and compensation measures. I want to thank all those Members who contributed their own submissions, firmly backing the Association's submission with great numbers.

The Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 is unnecessary and diminishes the property rights of farmers. Thankfully after extensive lobbying pressure we did win a pause for greater consideration of this Bill. We didn't believe a Bill this complex, with large potential for ramifications should be rushed through. This pause has enabled us to gain greater legal advice and develop some key amendments, which we have been busy presenting to politicians. The Bill is scheduled for debate in the Upper House next Tuesday 11 May.

On the issue of drought, this week's announcement from the Federal Government of a 12 month trial for new drought assistance measures doesn't give enough time for measuring the reforms effectiveness. The funding stream for the farm business grants will be over a 4 year period, so 12 months trial doesn't make sense.

We also have concerns that the pilot does not allow for emergency or exceptional relief in times of severe drought.

The removal of the interest rate subsidy is a major loss, only partly replaced with the Farm Business Grant and the Landcare Adaptation Grant which are both over 4 years.

Planning, preparedness and social support are all welcome measures, and the pilot period will allow for consideration of the effectiveness of the changes. We will however be lobbying for an extended pilot and eligibility criteria that enable access to the new measures.

Finally, this week we announced the *Rebuilding the Regions – Workshop* to be held in conjunction with the NSW Liberals & Nationals, Rural Alliance and others. It will be held on Friday 11 June, at Charles Sturt University Dubbo, from 9am, with the day concluding at 4:30pm.

**Until next fortnight,  
Charles Armstrong**

If you no longer wish to receive the NSW Farmers' Presidents Update simply [click here](#) to unsubscribe...

If you are having difficulty unsubscribing from this page please email us on [msc@nswfarmers.org.au](mailto:msc@nswfarmers.org.au) and we will remove you from our lists.