



# Senator the Hon. Joe Ludwig

## MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
Senator for Queensland

25 February 2011

### Expiry of Exceptional Circumstances-declared areas

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator Joe Ludwig, today announced the end of exceptional circumstances assistance in several parts of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia due to improved seasonal conditions.

The Australian Government has accepted the independent advice of the National Rural Advisory Council on 21 Exceptional Circumstances declarations.

NRAC considered 21 declarations that are scheduled to expire on 31 March 2011.

The Government has accepted NRAC's advice to extend assistance for the River Murray and Lower Lakes Corridor area in South Australia until 31 March 2012.

NRAC concluded that assistance should not be extended in 14 areas in New South Wales, 5 areas in Victoria and 1 area in South Australia. The Government has accepted this advice.

"NRAC found that improved seasonal conditions across New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia have given the majority of producers the opportunity to recover from drought and return to typical farm management practices," Minister Ludwig said.

"This is welcome relief for many farmers who are emerging from almost 10 long years in drought.

"According to the latest crop report from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, the 2010-11 national winter crop will reach 42.1 million tonnes – a 19 per cent increase on the previous crop and the largest since 2003-04.

"However, the Government recognises that many farming communities in the east states of Australia are facing new challenges due to severe flooding in recent months.

"The Gillard Government has been quick to roll-out assistance to farmers and small businesses affected by flooding through the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA), which includes financial assistance measures such as grants, loans and subsidies.

"This is the most appropriate form of assistance to help people in flood-affected areas during this difficult period."

The Federal Government is also in preliminary discussions with state governments to extend assistance measures to flood-affected primary producers under the NDRRA.

Information about the range of assistance measures available to primary producers and small businesses in flood-affected areas is available at [www.disasterassist.gov.au](http://www.disasterassist.gov.au).

NRAC's recommendations on the 21 exception circumstances-declared areas and additional information on EC assistance can be found at: [www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/drought/ec](http://www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/drought/ec).

State Governments are able to appeal the decisions regarding exceptional circumstances declarations, where they can provide new and significant information in relation to drought recovery in affected areas.

Where significant and new information is provided, the Government will ask NRAC to carefully consider these requests on a case-by-case basis.

Further information on assistance available to drought-affected families and businesses is available from the Drought Assistance Hotline on 13 23 16.