



Senator the Hon. Joe Ludwig

MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Senator for Queensland

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Minister welcomes findings of Drought Pilot Review

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Senator Joe Ludwig today welcomed the findings of the review into the pilot of drought reform measures in Western Australia.

The Drought Pilot is a joint initiative of the Australian and Western Australian Governments which has been testing programs and assistance measures designed to help farmers better manage and prepare for future challenges such as drought.

An independent Drought Pilot Review Panel was appointed in February 2011 to assess the efficiency, effectiveness, appropriateness and preliminary outcomes of the pilot measures.

Minister Ludwig said the panel's findings build on the 2008-2009 review of national drought policy and will inform further consideration of national drought policy reform.

"The panel's report considers the capacity of the pilot measures, over the long term, to improve farmers' ability to adapt and manage farm risks," Minister Ludwig said.

The Drought Pilot was announced with \$18 million in funding as part of the 2010-11 Budget and was extended and expanded for a further 12 months, with an additional \$44.1 million in the 2011-12 Budget.

The panel recommended these measures for a future drought policy platform:

- an income support safety net for farm families in hardship that is available based on demonstrated individual need;
- the permanent presence of social support services delivered via outreach to people in rural communities;
- continuing opportunities to engage in and implement strategic farm business planning; and
- ongoing access to the Farm Management Deposits scheme and existing tax incentives for primary producers.

"I am pleased the panel has been able to deliver their report ahead of schedule to allow for its early consideration," Minister Ludwig said.

"I would like to thank the chair Mick Keogh and panel members Sue Middleton and Bob Granger for their work, and all those who helped inform their views during the stakeholder consultation and submission process.

"I look forward to discussing the outcomes of the pilot review and national drought policy reform with my State and Territory counterparts, including WA Minister for Agriculture and Food Terry Redman, in the coming months."

Any future reforms will be consistent with the principles for drought policy reform, reconfirmed through the Primary Industries Ministerial Council on 14 July 2011. A copy of the panel's report is available on the Drought Pilot website at www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/drought-pilot/drought-pilot-review.