



**Minister Steve Whan**  
Minister for Primary Industries  
Minister for Emergency Services  
Minister for Rural Affairs

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **NSW requests review of Hume EC withdrawal**

March 31, 2010

Minister for Primary Industries, Steve Whan, has asked Federal Minister for Agriculture, Tony Burke, to review the decision to withdraw Exceptional Circumstances (EC) assistance for the Hume district from 31 March.

"I have written to Mr Burke outlining why the NSW Government believes EC assistance for Hume should be extended for a further 12 months and supplied detailed information to support our request," Minister Whan said.

"The whole of the Hume area has returned to drought as a result of a very dry summer and in addition, parts of the area have suffered major bushfire damage."

Mr Whan said the current situation in the Hume EC area was reflected in the current NSW drought figures, with the entire area remaining in drought.

"Seasonal conditions had allowed some producers to return to typical farm management practices when NRAC toured the area on 1 December, but they had not had sufficient time to enable their farm businesses to recover," he said.

"The concept of a recovery year in EC assistance policy was included to ensure that support be provided for a sufficient period to recover to the point that farm businesses could once again stand alone.

"It seems in this case that the assessment has unduly focussed on agricultural conditions at the time of the assessment, rather than whether improved conditions have been sustained long enough to provide producers with an adequate opportunity to recover."

Supporting information supplied to Mr Burke includes:

- Recent rainfall data
- Soil moisture and pasture conditions
- Current farm production figures
- Drought impact information

Mr Whan said the supporting information package highlighted the prolonged and continuing impacts of the drought and the lack of sustained recovery conditions.

"I have instructed my department to provide any further information that may be required as a matter of urgency," Mr Whan said.