

The Hon. Tony Burke MP

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Minister for Sustainable Population

WA Drought Pilot Bill passed by Parliament

28 June 2010

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A new era in drought support will go ahead with the passing of drought support legislation by the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The drought reform will be trialled in a WA pilot, announced by Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Tony Burke in May this year, which will create a drought support system that moves from crisis management to risk management.

"This is an important step in creating a system of drought support that allows farmers to plan and prepare for the future while still providing relief in the tough times," Mr Burke said.

"The legislation has been passed by both houses of parliament giving the green light to the drought trial and the introduction of this important reform.

"These measures deliver on a commitment to reform drought support and are designed to help farmers, farm families and rural communities better prepare for future challenges, including drought and a changing climate."

"Importantly, this reform will deliver crucial support to farming families and communities to end the uncertainty under the current system and prevent farms from hitting that crisis point.

"The trial is being conducted in part of Western Australia with the cooperation of the Western Australian Government, for all other parts of Australia the system of Exceptional Circumstances remains unchanged," said Mr Burke.

A total of \$17.9 million has been allocated by the Federal Government and \$5 million by the Western Australian Government to fund the WA drought reform pilot.

The drought reform pilot will run for 12 months from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011.

For more information visit www.daff.gov.au/droughtpilot.