



21 August 2008

Drought Support Inquiry
Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2
Collins Street East
MELBOURNE VIC 8003

Dear Sir

Re: Drought Support Submission

CANEGROWERS represents approximately 80% of Queensland's sugarcane growers. The organisation supports the submissions by National Farmers' Federation and Queensland Farmers' Federation and has been involved during the development of those submissions.

One aspect that should be considered as part of the review of drought policies is the impacts of other extreme weather and climatic events which would have effects on a large number of rural industry areas similar to that caused by drought. This includes frost, hail, cyclones and floods, and there are no doubt other extreme climatic events to consider. These severe situations have, in the past, caused significant adverse impacts on farm production of similar magnitude to that caused by drought.

Any proposed new mechanisms for preparedness and recovery from drought should therefore be equally applicable to wide range of severe climatic event situations.

Furthermore, mechanisms for immediate disaster recovery support from cyclones, floods, hail and frost should be considered as part of the review process. Some agricultural enterprises experience severe short term impacts – for example ,bananas during Cyclone Larry – while others experience similarly severe short term impacts as well as ongoing recovery impacts – for example, sugarcane farms during Cyclone Larry, where the impacts were felt during the next 24 months.

CANEGROWERS believes support mechanisms for recent events – for example, the January and February 2008 floods in Emerald, Mackay and Burdekin regions and, before that, the recovery from Cyclone Larry – provide an example of how well received some practical changes can be. While those support mechanisms were welcome, there is scope for improvement.

CANEGROWERS welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this review, both as an individual organisation and through our partners National Farmers' Federation and Queensland Farmers' Federation.

Yours faithfully

Ian J Ballantyne
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER