

To Whom it May Concern

I would firstly like to apologize for the delay in forwarding this submission to the Inquiry. As you would be aware Local Government is in the midst of elections and to get a representative approach to our submission has been difficult. None the less, the Central Darling Shire Council would like put forward a few points that may be considered by the Inquiry. Specifically these include:

1. The present system allows non-profitable farmers to access exceptional circumstances payments and therefore impedes any structural adjustments.
2. The Government needs to make a decision on whether to support and maintain rural communities. If this decision is positive then the Government needs to engage the local communities to promote economic activities and basically spend money in the local community. This would ideally be done through the Local Government authority of the area and provided on a medium to long term basis.
3. It is suggested that interest subsidies be discontinued as they only prop up inefficient farmers. It may be preferable to consider low interest loans of say around 4% which could be drawn from a separate fund that could be used to assist all viable farmers within the community.
4. Support is extended for the present exit package and household support schemes.
5. Interest subsidies and relief should be available to all farmers affected by the drought and not just those in exceptional circumstances.

I trust that these few points are of assistance to the Inquiry.

Tim Hazell
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Central Darling Shire Council