

My name is Clive Linnett. I am a grazier of the Ivanhoe district and my property name is "Kilfera" along with my wife and son and we graze sheep & cattle. My family have had pastoral interests in the Ivanhoe district for 98 years and prior to that in the Hatfield / Balranald area.

I was awarded an OAM on Australia Day 2003 for voluntary services to Local Government and to the Western Division of NSW. I have been a Shire Councillor of Central Darling Shire for 18 years and was recently re-elected for another term.

### **Drought began and Agistment**

*This current drought began in 1992 in the Ivanhoe area with relief at times but not for long.*

*Currently I have cattle on agistment at Wanaaring on the Paroo which has cost me \$50,000.00 including freight over the past eleven months. This is the fourth time they have been on agistment since 2000 and up to two years at a time.*

*I travel a lot of kilometers in the western division of NSW with shire duties as well as being on the Western Lands Advisory Council and there is a lot of hardship with families and being a Board Member of the former Wentworth/Balranald Rural Counselling Service, I speak to a lot of families.*

### **Drought Forum in Griffith.**

*In September I attended a Drought Forum in Griffith which was a sad occasion when people spoke of the health problems. Commodity prices, water and financial hardships that is being experienced and sadly lives have been taken.*

### **Families Leaving**

**People do not understand what is happening in the back county. Families that have wanted to sell, they have done so and the properties have got bigger which has left a lot of empty homesteads. This has been recommended however, within 5 years they are being resold because of the continuing drought and the interest bill.**

## Decline

*An example of the decline in the rural areas, Ivanhoe had 180 pupils at the Ivanhoe Central School 20 years ago and today there are 37. This is a true example of the decline of the rural families and the small businesses in our rural towns. The families that are left on their properties are hopefully here for the long run.*

## Interest Subsidy

It appears to me with the Interest Subsidy that the Australian Government has already made up its mind to abolish this scheme in 2010, even before any consultation took place and I note it is a recommendation in the Governments Draft Inquiry report.

This is where I feel that the Interest Subsidy should continue for the viable landholders, because if it is taken away in 2010 there will be families walking off their properties as there will be foreclosures by the Financial Houses.

## Newstart Allowance

The Newstart Allowance should be continued as I can assure you in a lot of cases this money is putting bread & butter on the table for many families as there are a lot of empty kitchen pantries as I have been asked confidentially to hand out food vouchers on behalf of charitable organizations to rural families and the response has been very appreciative.

*J. M. Lennett*

*8-12-08.*