

To the Review Panel into the Farm Household Assistance program.

I wish to submit the following submission:

My husband and I are farmers in the Tamworth district and are struggling with the ongoing drought. I have not been able to determine yet if we are eligible for any assistance because of the complexity and number of forms to be filled out.

I wish to make the following points:-

- farmers are time poor, and usually exhausted by the time we finish their day, and the huge number of forms to fill out is very daunting. The forms should be simplified and condensed. Yes, farmers need to establish that they are genuine farmers, but surely that could be done with one much simplified form.

- In assessing our assets, the value of our furnishings should have nothing to do with the application, we are not likely to start selling the curtains or lounge suite, nor should we have to. Does any other assistant recipient have to estimate the value of their curtains, and how is this relevant?
- This drought is a natural, national disaster, and should be treated the same as giving help to people affected by floods or bushfires, why is this any different?
- The Farm Household Assistance should only be based on each farm's expected income or actual income for each 12 month period. Also any money banked by farmers from selling livestock, should not be counted as that money is needed to restock after the end of the drought so that we can continue to be contributing to the country's economy.
- Superannuation capital should not be counted in the assets estimate, as that has been accumulated by good management and hard work, and from being thrifty, and has been put away for our retirement, instead of expecting a government pension for the rest of our lives. Yes the income generated from the Super should be counted, but not the capital.
- In our case, we have one farm which consists of 6 separate DP numbers and titles totalling 530 acres. Currently we have to fill out a separate application form for each title which is totally ridiculous, time consuming, and unnecessary. All we should have to do is supply our last tax return, an estimate of expected income, proof of identity, one copy of our LLS rates, and council rates with a simplified application form. Instead we have to fill out a separate form for each title, and supply copies of the above listed rates notices with each one. This is beyond unreasonable.

In closing I hope the Panel will consider the points I have raised, and make assistance for farmers in this dreadful drought easier and more accessible, which it certainly isn't at the moment.

I thank you for your time.

Sincerely,


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