

Our Reference: OUT17/41606

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Mr Cameron Hutchinson
Chair
IGA Review Working Group
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Dear Mr Hutchinson

Thank you for your letter regarding the joint review being undertaken of the Intergovernmental Agreement on National Drought Program Reform (IGA) between the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments which is due to expire on 1 July 2018.

As you are aware the NSW Government released its NSW Drought Strategy in February 2015 to implement the IGA. This strategy aimed to deliver a more transparent and targeted effective response to drought in NSW in accordance with the IGA.

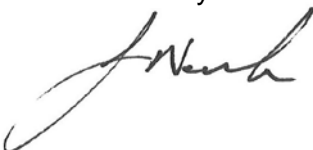
The IGA is an important document that has helped shaped a more consistent approach to farmer assistance programs across jurisdictions. These programs in NSW have shifted the focus away from emergency in-drought assistance to drought preparedness programs. The IGA has assisted the NSW Government to introduce appropriate programs to help farmers meet the future challenges of drought and as such does not require overly prescriptive changes to the document.

However the Committee did note that the Commonwealth programs are very specific and the provision of slightly more prescriptive wording for States and Territories may provide clearer guidance.

Collaboration between States has been limited previously and we would suggest that the review take the opportunity to improve cross jurisdictional collaboration between the States, Territories and the Commonwealth Government. Sharing of information between jurisdictions about programs implemented will provide a space for learning and ensure the most effective programs can be duplicated across borders.

The Regional Assistance Advisory Committee appreciates the opportunity to comment in this important review process to ensure that the farmers of NSW have access to the most appropriate information, advice and assistance measures.

Yours sincerely



For
Andrew Locke
Chair, NSW Regional Assistance Advisory Committee

17 October 2017