



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Bundarra EC decision can be appealed

Bundarra farmers are being encouraged by the Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor to appeal the decision of the Minister for Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry, Tony Burke not to grant Exceptional Circumstance (EC) status for the area around Bundarra in the north of the New England Electorate.

Mr Windsor says that under the EC process, the NSW State Minister can re-apply for a smaller area which would allow for the areas most affected by the drought conditions to be more clearly identified and assessed rather than being lumped in with areas that have had better rainfall.

“The farmers of Bundarra need to have their zone redefined to the areas that have been more affected by the drought conditions.

“This has previously been achieved in an area just to the west of Glen Innes a few years back that had been knocked back three times for EC assistance.

“Under the current process in which a large area is being assessed by the National Rural Advisory Council (NRAC), if one part doesn't meet the criteria, then it wipes out the rest of the area.

“I would encourage those affected to go back to the NSW State Minister to pursue this strategy,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor was critical of some people who appear to want to just politicise the process rather than deliver an outcome for those affected.

“The current Exceptional Circumstance assessment process is the same under the current Government as it was under the previous Coalition Government.

“The previous Government set up the NRAC as an independent review authority to look at the circumstances independent of any political interference and provided them with the guidelines under which they should assess each application.

“This process has not changed and no Agriculture Minister, present or past, has gone against a recommendation of the NRAC.

“It is now up to those affected to seek the redefinition of the area to be assessed through the NSW State Minister which I am very happy to assist them with and with the involvement of the Member for Northern Tablelands, Richard Torbay,” Mr Windsor said.

For further information contact Tony Windsor, Ph (02) 6761 3080 or 0427 66 8868