



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Windsor asks Minister for quick answer on Bundarra EC application**

The plight of farmers around Bundarra waiting for an answer to their Drought Exceptional Circumstance Assistance application has been raised again with the Minister for Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry, Tony Burke by the Independent Member for New England Tony Windsor.

Speaking to the Farm Household Support Amendment Bill in the Parliament yesterday with Minister Burke in the Chamber, Mr Windsor said:

*“The other thing that I would like to do is to briefly note, Minister, while you are at the table in the chamber, that you are fully aware of the Bundarra area exceptional circumstances arrangement.*

*It highlights some of the great difficulties with the existing system as to where the rain falls, the rain gauges, the rain events and the lines on maps.*

*The people in Bundarra are looking for some answer as quickly as possible so that they can have some certainty as to where they are actually going, so I would encourage you to take that on board.*

*It is a pocket of land in my electorate that unfortunately has been dealt a fairly bad hand in recent years, whereas other areas around it have been doing quite well. This area of little doughnuts is not doing very well at all in terms of rainfall.”*

Minister Burke in his summing up speech responded to Mr Windsor’s request saying:

*“If I can turn to one other issue, Mr Deputy Speaker, that does not relate to the bill but was referred to in debate by the member for New England, there is an understandable frustration for people in the Bundarra region that there has been such a long wait to get certainty as to whether they would get an exceptional circumstances declaration.*

*A number of issues have contributed to this challenge. One of them has been that state governments, understandably, always want to apply for the biggest possible area they can for exceptional circumstances declarations.*

*Because the National Rural Advisory Council has to do an averaging across the region, if the region applied for is big, it is harder to get the approval.*

*Bundarra has been going back and forth over a number of applications. With the latest one, the advice from NRAC is with government. I am working to get that through the processes of government as quickly as possible so we can make an announcement and provide certainty. The people of Bundarra should be well assured that the member for New England has been consistent in making their case known to government, and I certainly do hope it is not too much longer before we are able to provide them with an answer.*

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