



## Committee releases report on drought assistance reform

The House of Representatives Agriculture Committee today released its report into the National Rural Advisory Council (NRAC) Annual Report 2011-12. The report covers a number of themes including NRAC's composition and the future of drought assistance.

NRAC's primary role in 2011-12 was the review of a number of expiring Exceptional Circumstances declarations, resulting in Australia being deemed drought free for the first time in a decade. NRAC then conducted assessments into multi-peril crop insurance, the effectiveness of the Farm Management Deposit scheme and the workforce planning capabilities of agribusiness.

Concurrently with the committee's inquiry, the Council of Australian Governments announced that it had entered into an inter-governmental agreement to reform Australia's Drought Policy. The agreement aims to provide financial assistance, business training, social support services, and to inform better farmer decision making.

A critical first step from the agreement was the introduction of a Farm Finance Package – which hopes to provide assistance to agribusiness starting by 1 July 2013. Other measures under the agreement are expected to commence on 1 July 2014.

Committee Chair Dick Adams MP said that the reform agreement and recent announcement was a win for farming families and rural communities.

"The committee has called on the Australian Government, states and territories to ensure that the reform package benefits flow to those experiencing hardship as soon as possible" he said.

A copy of the committee's report may be downloaded from its website:

[www.aph.gov.au/arff](http://www.aph.gov.au/arff)

**For media comment:** please contact the Committee Chair, the Hon Dick Adams MP, on (03) 6398 1115 or 0418 132 828 or email [D.Adams.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:D.Adams.MP@aph.gov.au)

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