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Submission: In support of the Reserve Bank Amendment (Australian Reconstruction and Development Board Bill)

I, Kate Harrington am writing this on behalf of our Family Beef Producing and Fattening Business, which employes our Two Sons and up to six other staff. The following is a brief outline of the business background.

We have 3 property groups, Our original Property "Ashton" and later "Curragilla"(1986) at Prairie (Flinders Shire) later "Waverly" and "Jindaroo"(1999) Hughenden (Flinders Shire) and "Lava Plains", Mt Garnet and agistment on 2 other neighbouring Properties (Charters Towers Shire). We purchased "Lava Plains" in 2004, as we were faced with drought and would need to completely destock, having done this once before we decided to expand into another rainfall region, which required us to extend our banking facility. At the end of 2012 we started destocking at Waverly and Ashton and sending stock to Lava Plains, as it became obvious that we were not going to get any sort of season. We agisted part of a property neighbouring Lava Plains, to retain all the weaners for the year, rather than attempt sending them to either of the other property groups. We also put over 4000 head into feedlots to produce a saleable product, margins were very small (The meatworks had supply and little competition) and like many we were also forced to sell into the large saleyards at Roma in March for a very slim return and huge freight bills. All this comes at a cost financially and personally.

Having recently done comparisons on 2004 and the 2013 costs of production, it is hard to see a future. If the younger generation can't see a future for themselves, we, as a nation will lose them to the city and other industries. To say others will learn skills required for farming at Tafe or College is lacking in understanding of the years of on the job training young people growing up on properties acquire. Some industries require experience and judgement only time can give.

We are continually being told to provide for drought (flood or fire),but to do this we need to extend and further develop the business, and some forced property sales, are the result of these extensions; need I add that the decision to shut down the live export trade gave many producers nowhere to go. Who can plan on such politics.

The Hughenden Forum on 11 December 2013 supported the establishment of an Australian Reconstruction and Development Board, with the aim of advancing agricultural finance and debt alleviation issues.

Several resolutions were passed at that meeting, which was attended by more than 60, mainly graziers, with some from the banking industry attending.

I was at that meeting; I would like to call on the Federal Government to commit to the provision of a reconstruction model capable of financial stabilisation of rural Australia and the reduction of rural debt.

I also ask the Federal Governments and Banks to immediately enact a moratorium on forced farm sales until effective action is taken, and solutions found, as a result of resolutions passed at this meeting.

Another resolution was passed, that the State and Federal Governments commit to a drought assistance scheme for agricultural businesses providing

- a. Exceptional circumstances provisions
- b. Low interest loans at RBA rates
- c. Immediate introduction of Centre Link payments for farming families, without means test.

I urge the Standing Committee on Economics to support the Reserve Bank Amendment Bill, for the sake of the agricultural industry across Australia.

Yours sincerely

Kate Harrington