



MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 19 March 2013

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

*Chair: The Hon Dick Adams MP
Deputy Chair: Alby Schultz MP*

Public hearing with National Rural Advisory Council

The National Rural Advisory Council (NRAC) will discuss its 2011-12 Annual Report when it meets with the House Agriculture Committee on 20 March 2013 in Canberra.

In 2011 – 12 NRAC's primary duties were to assess a number of Exceptional Circumstances (EC) declarations that remained in force in various regions of Australia on behalf of the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Committee chair Dick Adams MP said as a result of NRAC's review work, EC declarations for the Eurobodalla and Bundoora regions of New South Wales and the River Murray and Lower Lakes corridor in South Australia were lifted in 2011-12. He noted that following this review, "Australia was deemed officially drought free for the first time in a decade."

Mr Adams said the Committee was particularly interested in examining the independence of NRAC and the process by which EC declarations were assessed. Given that there are no ongoing EC declarations, Mr Adams also highlighted the Committees' interest "in developing an understanding of NRAC's other work, including: making assessments of agricultural insurance products; the effectiveness of the Farm Management Deposit scheme; and workforce planning capabilities of employers in the agricultural sector".

"NRAC's activities play a vital role in ensuring the long term viability of the rural sector, particularly in planning for future drought assistance measures, and the Committee wants to know that they're heading in the right direction" Mr Adams said.

PUBLIC HEARING

DATE: Wednesday 20 March 2013
TIME: 5.30pm – 6.30pm
VENUE: Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House CANBERRA

The hearing will be webcast live on: www.aph.gov.au/live

Further information about the Committee's inquiry including a program for the public hearing is available on the Committee's website at: 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

Further information: contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4500, email arff.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the Committee's webpage at <http://www.aph.gov.au/arff>