

**SUPPORT FOR DROUGHT AFFECTED COMMUNITIES IN NEW SOUTH
WALES**

Organisation: Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman

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Australian Government



Australian
**Small Business and
Family Enterprise**
Ombudsman

27 November 2019

Mr Justin Clancy
Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development
Parliament of New South Wales
SYDNEY NSW 2001

via email: investmentindustry@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Clancy

Support for drought affected communities in NSW

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry and support the submission of the NSW Small Business Commissioner during this period. It is important to acknowledge the struggle farmers are currently experiencing and the ripple effects this has for other small businesses in local communities

Drought assistance and support, traditionally focuses on the direct impact drought has on primary producers. However effective assistance should also support the wider business communities of rural and regional areas. There are a number of ways to assist non-farm small business in drought affected areas that include:

1. Reduced business activity has created financial hardship for many operators and, alongside government support, it is also important for financial institutions to offer appropriate refinance opportunities for small businesses. Bank could provide interest free periods on existing loans and remove bank fees.
2. Small business operators could be relieved from taxes and other levies through an option of deferred payments.
3. Drought relief should be given in cash not goods so as not to compete with local small business.
4. Rural community employment could be supported by bringing forward infrastructure projects for affected areas.
5. There is a need for increased access to mental health services during this drought and into the future.

We strongly support the marketing and procurement initiatives undertaken by the NSW Small Business Commissioners' office to highlight small business products and/or services in regional areas. Through social media campaigns such as @buyfromthebush on Instagram, affected small businesses and their communities have benefited through additional income and support being injected into these rural and remote areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Bryan Smith on [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

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Kate Carnell AO

Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman

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