

NORTHERN TERRITORY CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION INC

Member - National Farmers' Federation & Cattle Council of Australia



Media Release

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Canberra approves historic drought aid for NT cattlemen

In an historic first for the Northern Territory, the Australian Government has granted drought-affected Central Australian pastoralists access to emergency aid through its Exceptional Circumstances drought relief program.

The decision, announced today by Territory Senator and Federal Community Services Minister Nigel Scullion, follows intense lobbying by the NT Cattlemen's Association (NTCA).

It opens the way for more than 30 affected pastoralists in the Plenty and northern and southern Alice Springs districts to immediately apply for up to six months interim income support.

NTCA president Roy Chisholm applauded the decision. "It means Central Australian pastoralists, facing their third and fourth year of severe drought after 36 months with little or no rain, can finally see light at the end of the tunnel," he said.

Mr Chisholm led two delegations to Canberra last year to present the case to Agriculture Minister Peter McGauran for drought-affected Territory properties to be declared eligible for relief through the Exceptional Circumstances program.

"Minister McGauran completely understood the problems facing Central Australian producers and has delivered with this first stage of the EC assistance package," Mr Chisholm said. .

"This is the first time Exceptional Circumstance drought relief has been granted to the Territory and means affected properties can now receive the same Australian Government assistance as those in NSW, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia.

"Our Central Australian pastoralists are critical to the overall strength of the Territory cattle industry, managing more than 200,000 sq km of land and producing 60,000 premium cattle in a normal season. They cannot be abandoned to fend for themselves when the times get tough."

"I sincerely thank Senator Nigel Scullion and Territory Member David Tollner for so forcefully backing our case in Canberra. I also thank Minister Chris Natt and the staff of NT Department Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines and the NTCA staff for their tireless efforts in preparing the comprehensive Exceptional Circumstances package that has brought new hope to our drought-affected pastoralists."

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'Advancing and protecting the interests of the cattle producers in the Northern Territory'