

SUBMISSION NO. 8

Secretary: ...*W. Truss*.....

RECEIVED

15 AUG 2002

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES
AND FORESTRY

Dear Sir,

I understand the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Warren Truss has initiated an inquiry into future water supplies for Australia's rural industries & communities. I would like to make the submission below:

From the early 1990's until 2001, the Commonwealth was responsible for significant research progress on drought prediction through the National Climate Variability Program. This program facilitated collaborative projects across organisations, and enabled staff in Federal and State agencies (where there is often a requirement for external co-funding) to address their expertise to find better ways for rural communities cope with our variable climate. I understand this program is no longer funded by the Commonwealth.

This program needs to be recommenced with a focus on

- communicating effective drought management strategies to landolders
- research on climate change impacts, such as surface water supplies

It is ironical that just after the program was terminated, the Nation faces a drought. How much better would we be coping if the scientific and extension staff who had gained knowledge and skills under the National Climate Variability Program now had funded projects whereby their knowledge could be transferred to rural communities ?

With kind regards,

Malcolm McCaskill
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