

From: [Gregory Electorate Office](#)
To: [Agriculture and Environment Committee](#)
Subject: Submission to the Agriculture and Environment Parliamentary Committee Review of the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme
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Research Director,
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VIA Email: aec@parliament.qld.gov.au

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**SUBMISSION TO THE AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT PARLIAMENTARY
COMMITTEE REVIEW OF THE
DROUGHT RELIEF ASSISTANCE SCHEME**

I wish to draw the Committee's attention to two much needed enhancements for the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme.

The current experience in Western Queensland, where landholders and their communities are facing their fourth year without an income, has highlighted the need for the Scheme to do more to support and assist the small business in towns in drought affected regions. The current drought in Western Queensland is driving small business into closure and even bankruptcy. This leaves two toxic legacies: the ongoing viability of many historic western towns is being drastically eroded and the population base for the delivery of government services such as education, health, safety and so on simply disappears.

Modifications to the DRAS so that it can assist small business before this happens is urgently required. I believe assistance could be offered to small business under DRAS by government instituting a reduction or moratorium on government charges such as electricity, water and government business charges for small business in drought-affected regions.

The second modification to the DRAS I urge the Committee to consider is allowing DRAS funds to be used by landholders to desilt dams on their properties. This maintenance can only be carried out in a drought but is necessary for proper water management when the drought breaks. It also provides landholders with constructive work they can undertake when so much of the daily work is destructive such as selling down or destroying stock and wildlife. In this sense the DRAS funding does triple duty by providing a mental health benefit, an infrastructure benefit and a positive legacy for when the drought breaks.

I thank the Committee for their consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

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