



MEDIA RELEASE

Tamworth to host FHA review panel

05 Nov 2018

Member for New England, Barnaby Joyce, has successfully secured a hearing in Tamworth (November 14) for the Farm Household Allowance (FHA) review panel next week.

The independent review panel is holding face-to-face consultations across the country seeking farmers' views on accessing the FHA.

News of the Tamworth panel date follows Mr Joyce's approaches to Government about the plight of New England farmers in drought and the widespread effects the ongoing dry conditions are having on people and communities across the region.

"I fought hard to bring this review panel to the New England so those locally who are involved in the industry can have a say, and now it's a reality," Mr Joyce said.

"People will be able to speak to a person, not just someone over the phone or email, about what's working and what's not with the Farm Household Allowance payments and eligibility.

"We're after not only individuals and farming families but also those who deliver the support, including accountants, agronomists, financial advisors, counsellors, agricultural suppliers and even the general public – anyone who has an opinion on the FHA process, they're welcome to have a say."

The panel has already visited places like Casino, Mildura and Warwick, and will this week visit Bunbury, Western Australia, before heading to Tamworth, Dubbo and Bairnsdale to hear from more farmers and stakeholders.

The Government has already made changes to the FHA, including simplifying the application form, cutting it by a third; extending how long people can receive FHA from three to four cumulative years; as well as investing an extra \$5 million for the free Rural Financial Counselling Service to assist farmers in applying for FHA.

Tamworth also recently hosted a FHA information session, where applicants met in person with department representatives outside business hours to discuss their eligibility and ask questions about the payments. Another FHA information session will be held in Inverell on November 17.

The FHA review panel will meet in Tamworth on November 14 and those unable to attend can

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Hon **Barnaby Joyce** MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR NEW ENGLAND

provide written submissions by the deadline on Friday, November 9. There's also a short survey on Have Your Say—with access to this online survey extended until November 16.

The review panel includes Mrs Michele Lawrence (Chair), member of the Agricultural Industry Advisory Council and dairy farmer, Tasmania; Ms Georgie Somerset, Deputy Chair of Agforce and cattle farmer, Queensland; and Professor Robert Slonim, Professor of Economics at the University of Sydney and former director of the Australian Government's Behavioural Economics Team, NSW.

The panel will provide its findings, deliberations and recommendations to government in the first half of 2019.

For further information, or to register to attend a session, contact FHAReview@agriculture.gov.au or visit <https://haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/fha-review-2018>

(ENDS)

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