

# Media Release



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**Commonwealth assistance package welcomed by ADF**

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**For Immediate Release**

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Australia's peak dairy farmer body has welcomed an industry assistance package outlined this morning by Federal Agriculture Minister, Barnaby Joyce.

"We've been pressing the Federal Government for an appropriate response to this unprecedented dairy industry shock, recognising State Governments in the States most affected have already stepped up to the plate," said Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) CEO Ben Stapley.

"In principle the Minister's announcement meets many of the urgent needs of dairy farmers that we have been representing to the Commonwealth in recent weeks.

"We appreciate recognition that this shock is a combination of factors leading to what we call a market super down cycle, and that the fundamentals of our industry and the entire sector are strong."

He said dairy farmers were not asking for a bailout. The industry has backed itself and believes the long-term resolution rests with it, but that Governments can help to bridge to the resolution.

ADF has sought interest rate assistance for farmers and the adapted concessional loan scheme for dairy farmers flagged by Mr Joyce should help answer this need.

"Exceptional circumstance recovery grants would be a useful addition and we will continue to press for these," Mr Stapley said.

More resources for Rural Financial Counselling is a significant gain and will help to ensure dairy farmers are making decisions based on the best available and most accurate information about their business.

Further support for Dairy Australia's *Tactics For Tight Times* initiative and streamlined access to various Government services will also directly benefit farm businesses.

"In the dry conditions affecting much of Australia's dairy production zone, we will continue to press for the release of Commonwealth-owned environmental water, and to advocate for stronger competition policy with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, to smooth out volatility and safeguard the future of our industry," Mr Stapley said.

"Dairy farmers are not asking for a return to past days of a highly-regulated market, and they are not asking for consumers to be punished with a tax as proposed by some on the fringe of our industry.

"With the right support and collaboration in our industry, with consumers and with Governments, we can work through this and build a stronger future for the entire dairy sector."

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