



PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

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DROUGHT

The Prime Minister today said there would be a major review of drought relief arrangements.

Mr Fraser said he had written to the Premiers of New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia asking for their agreement to the holding of a meeting of Commonwealth and State officials shortly to review the drought situation throughout mainland Australia.

While some Premiers had requested extensions of the existing measures supported under the natural disaster financial assistance arrangements, good rains in some areas had resulted in an easing of drought conditions.

It was now time, Mr Fraser said, to completely reassess the situation to see what measures were needed to assist those producers who had not benefitted from the rain.

In many areas, of course, follow up rains would be required before it could be said the drought had broken.

While the States have the primary responsibility for deciding on measures which the Commonwealth should be asked to support, the Prime Minister emphasised that the Commonwealth wished to ensure that all practicable steps were being taken to ensure that farmers throughout the drought areas received whatever support is required to see them through this difficult period.

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