

The Uniting Church in Australia NSW Synod  
Board of Mission



**The Hon. Ian MacDonald  
Minister for Primary Industries**

**Dear Sir,**

**I writing to you to express my grave disappointment at the NSW Government's decisions in the November 11th mini-budget concerning the closure of the D.P.I. Agricultural research stations at Alstonville, Berry, Condoblin, Glenn Innes, Gosford, Griffith, Temora and the Jydabine Hatchery. I also am concerned about the proposed sale of 140 hectares of the farming land attached to Hurlstone Agricultural College.**

**I realise that it is the NSW Government's responsibility to address the economic issues that will affect the whole state. It is a time for leadership that should look at the possibilities for putting our state on a competitive level with the other states and even internationally. It is disheartening to see our state government following poor corporate leadership in rationalising our most valuable resources, that is our learning and research centers.**

**The value of our agricultural research centers is inestimable not only in the development of cutting edge food production but also for the social and economic capital the centers and the people who work in them bring to their communities. As for Hurlstone Agricultural College, how can an agricultural school teach its students adequately without enough land to practice its methodologies.**

**As a rural chaplain I have worked closely with the people of country NSW over the last five years and I have been amazed at their resilience and fortitude. However, I have also noticed that the morale of many people is low due to the rural recession and the drought.**

**If the NSW Government chooses to close down, sell off and rationalise key infrastructure that is essential to the on going**

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cross-cultural  
local  
outback and  
world mission

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**development of primary industries in NSW, it demonstrates clearly that the NSW Government puts a low priority on this industry and the people who derive their living from it. This policy also has the potential of placing primary industries in NSW as followers and not leaders in the market place.**

**It is for these reasons Minister, that I call upon you and our government to show creative and innovative leadership, that hold on to the investments made wisely over many years which have yielded great dividends for the people of NSW.**

**I have no doubt the people of NSW will save money in the short term if this policy proceeds.**

**My question is how much will the people of NSW lose in the decades to come?**

**Yours sincerely,**

**Rev. Kel Hodge**