



Newsletter

November 2007

Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc
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Website: www.nswfarmwriters.org

The New King of Regional and Rural Media

It's about six months since Fairfax and Rural Press completed their friendly merger and Rural Press acquired the Riverina Media Group. The Fairfax Media Group now dominates regional and agricultural publishing in NSW.

With a major push into digital media, radio and television production the company will control more than just newspapers. The Group's ability to generate and disseminate information puts it in a powerful commercial and political position in NSW. With all those regional titles in its stable, Fairfax Media has a vested interest in the future viability of agriculture and regional NSW communities.

So what are the Fairfax Group's future plans for regional media? How does a major commercial stakeholder see regional NSW communities remaining viable into the future?

Fairfax Media Chief Executive Officer David Kirk will address these questions at the Farm Writers Seminar on Friday, October 23. David Kirk became CEO of Fairfax Media in 2005. Prior to that, he was the CEO and Managing Director of PMP Limited, the largest magazine and

commercial printing and media services company in Australia

.His previous roles have included Regional President, Australasia for Norske Skog and senior executive roles with Fletcher Challenge Paper and Fletcher Challenge Energy, in Australia and New Zealand. Earlier in his career, he was chief policy advisor to former New Zealand Prime Minister Jim Bolger.

David Kirk is probably best known for his long career with the All Blacks. He represented New Zealand in rugby union from 1983-1987. In 1987, under his leadership the All Blacks won the inaugural Rugby World Cup and he was awarded an MBE for services to rugby. Mr Kirk is currently President of the New Zealand Rugby Players Association. He is also an honorary ambassador for the World Food Program.

Under Mr Kirk's leadership, Fairfax Media has made major investments into digital media and e-commerce. A major challenge for Mr Kirk is to make the mixture of editorial content and online services that is driving Fairfax's growth in metropolitan markets work in regional Australia.



David Kirk MBE, CEO of Fairfax Media: Where's my copy of The Land?

Join our corporate members of the month **Westpac Agribusiness** and **McGrath Nicol** to hear David Kirk provide Fairfax's view on whether the communication infrastructure in regional Australia is robust enough to sustain the services necessary to encourage economic growth.

Don't Forget: The Farm Writers seminar is one week earlier this month to accommodate the Christmas lunch on December 13.

To get your book of 6 (\$360) or 12 (\$720) vouchers contact Richard.Hincks@rabobank.com

To book your place for lunch on Friday 23 November, go to our website: www.nswfarmwriters.org/BOOKINGS.htm

Register early and online for the Friday, 23 November lunch to hear the new king of rural and regional media, David Kirk.

Corporate Members of the Month Westpac Agribusiness and McGrath Nicol

Venue: The Menzies Hotel, 14 Carrington Street, Sydney

When: **Friday, 23 November 2007 at 12pm for 12:30pm**

Cost: \$60 per head, or voucher, for members. \$70 per head for all non-members

Register: **BEFORE 5:00pm on Wednesday 21 November 2007**
online: www.nswfarmwriters.org, email: bookings@nswfarmwriters.org

Reminder: If bookings are not cancelled by the deadline, the person making the booking will be invoiced. We will do our best to accommodate late bookings and cancellations – please phone Stuart Hutton (02) 9338 2626

Election Events – the Parties' Platforms

NSW Farm Writers has hosted presentations from both sides of politics during the Federal election campaign. Senator Kerry O'Brien, Labor's Shadow Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry addressed our October 26 seminar and the incumbent Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Peter McGauran, launched the Coalition's agriculture policy at a special Farm Writers election breakfast on November 13.

Labor's Vision for Australian Agriculture: Senator Kerry O'Brien

The National Farmers Federation campaign against Labor's broadband policy brought a strong rebuke from Labor's Shadow Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry Senator Kerry O'Brien. Speaking at the October 26 Farm Writers Seminar Senator O'Brien said the NFF's campaign was extraordinary.

"Frankly, NFF's decision to support the Coalition's second-class broadband policy is a betrayal of millions of Australians in rural and regional Australia," Senator O'Brien said. Senator O'Brien took exception to the view that Labor would scrap the \$2 billion Communication Fund to pay for its broadband policies, both in the bush and in the city. He said the Coalition would lock the fund away and regional Australia would have to wait 35 years to reach the same level of investment as that proposed by Labor. Senator O'Brien's speech ranged over broadband, the state of the Australian economy, quarantine policy, climate change and wheat marketing.

Senator O'Brien pointed to the achievements of previous Labor Primary Industries Ministers; exceptional circumstances policy, deregulation of the domestic wheat market, the forerunner to the Farm Management Deposit Scheme, the Research and Development Corporations and Landcare. He said Labor saw a need for Exceptional Circumstances policy to evolve to allow the rural sector to adjust to climate change. Labor has committed \$15 million to a Climate Change and Productivity Research Program to assist farmers to respond to climate change. The funds will be allocated to existing primary industry research and development corporations.

Farm Writers News

Our other man from Japan - Rural media icon Neil Inall, recently returned from Japan after attending the 51st International Federation of Agricultural Journalists Congress, with assistance from NSW Farm Writers, has some interesting observations on Japanese agriculture.

"One thing I won't forget is the beautifully presented pears in the gourmet food section of the ISETAN department store in Shinjuku, a suburb of Tokyo. If you had any concerns about where the pear came from all you had to do was put the number on the pear's tag into your mobile phone and up would pop a photo of the farmer and his wife who'd grown the fruit with details of their farming operation," Neil said.

While the Japanese Government was striving to achieve food self-sufficiency by 2015, Neil says this is a pipedream. The conference was told Japanese food self-sufficiency on a calorie basis was down to 39%. To see a full text of Neil's report, go to www.nswfarmwriters.org

Strengthening Australian Agriculture: The Coalition's Agriculture Policy Launch

The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Peter McGauran, launched the Coalition's agriculture policy at NSW Farm Writers with a promise to expand the National Livestock Identification System and undertake a comprehensive review of Australia's quarantine arrangements.

Mr McGauran said a wide review of Australia's quarantine system would commence when the Callinan Inquiry into the outbreak of equine influenza was complete. He committed the Government to spending an extra \$30 million to reduce the impact of weeds on Australia's farm sector, through research and utilising the expertise of farmers at the local level. There was a further \$15 million to fight pests and feral animals, with rabbits and camels given special mention. Funding was promised for an Export Partnerships

Funds to assist emerging export sectors, including the farm and food sectors, and \$10 million was allocated to establish an Expanding Australian Food and Beverage Exports program. Horticulture is to receive a further \$6 million to expand international markets.

"The future of Australian agriculture, across the country, is a bright one, and the Coalition has worked with our farmers to support them through the worst drought and to make sure they're positioned to capitalise on a return to normal weather patterns," Mr McGauran said.

The \$15 million earmarked for NLIS would be used to create a mirror database and develop a sheep industry database.

Copies of Senator O'Brien's speech and Minister McGauran's presentation are available at www.nswfarmwriters.org

Don't Forget !

Our annual Christmas function, hosted by the NSW Minister for Primary Industries Ian MacDonald will be held in NSW Parliament House on December 13. As always, members are asked to donate gifts for Christmas prize draws during the lunch. Gifts (a suggested value of \$25 or more) are needed by 5pm on Monday December 10.

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Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc

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