



# Newsletter

October 2003

President: Stuart Hutton (schutton@kpmg.com.au)

Secretary: Susan Madden (smadden@hassall.com.au)

Newsletter: Alan Dick (citynews.theland@ruralpress.com) and  
Andy Royal (aroyal@ozemail.com.au)

Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc. GPO Box 1108 Sydney NSW 2001  
Internet: [www.nswfarmwriters.org](http://www.nswfarmwriters.org)

## Farming 2003: "It's not just the drought"

**T**he guest speaker for our 31 October luncheon seminar, the vastly experienced former Deputy Prime Minister, Ian Sinclair, is planning a pretty much all-embracing look at the situation of agriculture in Australia today in his presentation.

He has called his address 'Farming 2003: It's not just the drought'.

Mr Sinclair believes while drought, fire and storm catch the public imagination, they are only part of the hazards and issues modern farmers have to face.

His list also includes salinity, water use and availability, rotational farming for sustainable agriculture, native vegetation management, volatile commodity markets, WTO post the Cancun debacle, an appreciating dollar, efficient land use, and access to local community services such as education, health, road and rail transport, communications and banking.

But he also believes that although the list is long and the solutions complex, there is hope.

He has set himself an ambitious task, but a look at his CV reveals he is uniquely qualified to comment on agriculture and rural Australia from a wide range of perspectives.

Mr Sinclair, who lives in rural NSW and breeds cattle and sheep, has worn a seemingly endless series of hats in his long political career and since his retirement from Federal Parliament in 1988.

He was born in Sydney, educated at Knox Grammar School, obtained a law degree at Sydney University and was admitted as a barrister in 1952.

From 1961 to 1963 he was a member of the NSW Legislative Council and from 1963 to 1988 represented the

seat of New England in the Federal House of Representatives as a County/National Party member.

He served in the portfolios of Defence, Communications, Special Trade Negotiations, Primary Industry, Shipping and Transport, Social Services, Agriculture, Northern Territory and as Minister assisting John McEwen in Trade and Industry.

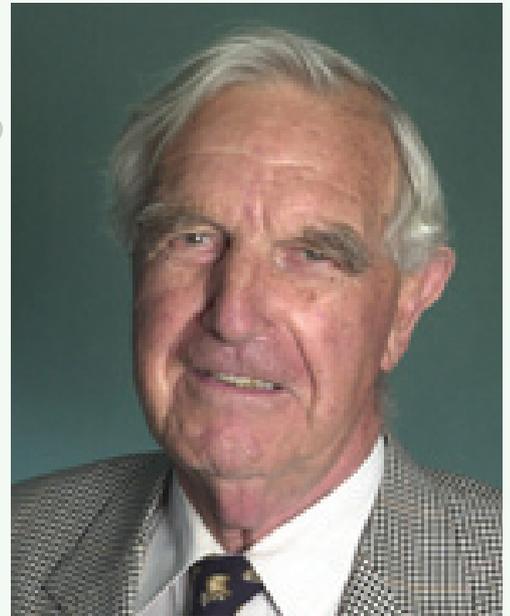
He was Leader and Deputy Leader of the National Party, Leader of the House and retired as Speaker in October 1988.

In retirement he has been no less busy. He co-chaired the Australian Constitutional Convention, and chaired the National Regional Summit, the Tamworth Summit of the rural doctor crisis and several other key forums.

Earlier this year he chaired the NSW Farmers Association's rail and road task force, and is currently chairman of the Native Vegetation Implementation Group.

Apart from that he finds time to be President of AUSTCARE and Scouts Australia - NSW, chair of the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, the CRC for Sheep, the Australia-Taiwan Business Council and Good Beginnings Australia.

He was also a member for five years of the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council.



**Register early and on-line for Friday 31 October's luncheon seminar with Ian Sinclair**

**Corporate 'Member of the Month': Du Pont (Australia) Ltd**

**Venue:** The **ALL SEASONS PREMIER MENZIES HOTEL** 14 Carrington Street, Sydney.

**When:** 12:00 noon for 12:30pm: Friday, 31 October, 2003 (AGM starts at 11:00am!)

**Cost:** \$50 per head, or voucher

**Register:** On-line before 5:00pm, Tuesday 28 October at [www.nswfarmwriters.org](http://www.nswfarmwriters.org). Or through Australian Honey Bee Industry Council's Laurel Pickering: [ahbic@honeybee.org.au](mailto:ahbic@honeybee.org.au) Phone: 02 9221 0911 or Fax: 02 9221 0922

**Late cancellations:** Phone Amy Lawrence (02 8204 3857) or Jamie Graham (0418 479 434)



**The bush is suffering a brain drain of young people from the late teens to the mid-30s and if it isn't rectified it will suffer a shortage of leadership in future.**

That's the gist of one of two themes covered by our guest speaker for the September lunch meeting, Dr John Keniry.

Dr Keniry chaired a five member panel that produced a regional business development analysis for the Federal Government a few months back.

He squeezed that job in among his numerous other roles, including the chairmanship of stock feed manufacturer, Ridley Corporation Ltd, and of Sydney Markets Ltd and Sugar Australia.

The analysis found that the best young people were leaving country towns to get an education and most were not returning.

It also showed country towns were finding it hard to attract skilled executives and professionals.

## **If you missed September's meeting ... We need to plug the bush brain drain!**

Rural infrastructure was also declining because of lack of government funding, which was another barrier to attracting more people.

The panel came up with several recommendations, including the development of a small business financing program along the lines of one successfully introduced in Canada.

It also suggested there should be accelerated depreciation of certain classes of fixed assets to counter the unwillingness of banks to lend more than a small proportion of the cost of capital assets in regional areas.

Regions could also help themselves by better planning and by benchmarking themselves on their strengths and weaknesses.

But Dr Keniry warned that many of these measures would meet resistance from Treasury "diehards" and some political pressure would be necessary to get them implemented.

His other theme was Woolpoll 2003. Dr Keniry is chairman of the panel which is organising the vote of woolgrowers on how much - if at all - they should be levied to finance continued research and development in the wool industry, and he briefly outlined the procedures and issues involved.

## **IFAJ Congress: South Africa**

Members applying for financial assistance from NSW Farm Writers' to attend the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ) Congress in South Africa (12 to 20 March 2004) should do so by 31 October.

Applicants will be assessed on the degree to which they have contributed to the association, how their attendance at the IFAJ congress will contribute to Farm Writers' charter and any other benefits to Farm Writers.

Successful applicants will be expected to provide a comprehensive written report within two months of the congress, which may be used by Farm Writers and published on its web site.

Applications should be sent to the Secretary (Susan Madden) preferably by email at [smadden@hassall.com.au](mailto:smadden@hassall.com.au), or posted to GPO Box 1108, Sydney, NSW, 2001.

IFAJ has negotiated the down cost of the South African congress by about 500 euros or about \$850, but this early bird rate closes at the end of November. The cost is now about \$1,840 twin share on the early bird rate, or about \$2,280 single.

## **Annual General Meeting**

**The 2003 Annual General Meeting of Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc will be held at 11:00am on Friday 31 October. Signed and seconded notices of motion should be forwarded by 24 October to Susan Madden, Secretary, Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc, GPO Box 1108 Sydney NSW 2001 ([smadden@hassall.com.au](mailto:smadden@hassall.com.au))**

## **End of year 'bash': Parliament House**

There will be no lucheon seminar in November. But don't fret, because, on Thursday, 11 December, we will have our traditional end of year get together in the Strangers' Dining Room at Parliament House, hosted by our new Patron, the NSW Minister for Agriculture & Fisheries, The Hon. Ian MacDonald.

In the spirit of Christmas, we again invite our corporate members ... or other companies/organisations, for that matter ... to provide suitable items as 'gifts' to be handed out to members and their guests on the day. If you would like to be part of this, please contact Noreen Coulton (Ph: 9953 4494. Email: [ncoulton@telpacific.com.au](mailto:ncoulton@telpacific.com.au)).