



**Adam Marshall**  
Minister for Agriculture  
Minister for Western NSW  
Member for Northern Tablelands

## MEDIA RELEASE

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# NEW DROUGHT ASSISTANCE PACKAGE EXPLAINED

### On farm assistance:

*“This package is all about building drought resilience for our farmers, reducing cost of living pressures and helping with cash flow issues during this difficult time,” Mr Marshall said.*

### **Boosting the Farm Innovation Fund - \$350 million<sup>1</sup>**

Delivering on the NSW Government’s promise to top up the Farm Innovation Fund (FIF) by \$350 million. The Fund provides low-interest loans of up to \$1 million for infrastructure projects that improve on-farm resilience and help farmers manage the impacts of drought. Examples of eligible projects include the construction of fodder storage facilities (e.g. silos, hay sheds), containment lots and de-silting of water storage. All existing FIF customers and applicants who submit an application before 30 June 2020 will have interest charges for FY2019-20 waived.

There are also \$50,000 interest free loans available which can be spent on any farm productivity measure, including the purchase of essential items, like fodder, water or farming equipment.

*“Drought is an inevitable part of living on a dry continent like ours. That’s why it’s critical we give farmers the right tools to not only make it through this drought but also prepare for the next dry spell,” Mr Marshall said.*

### **Reducing fees and charges - \$100 million**

Reducing government charges for farmers to reduce cost of living pressure and help those facing cash flow issues due to the extended nature of the drought. Includes waiving Local Land Services (LLS) rates (\$50 million), fixed water charges and bore licence fees in rural and regional areas (\$30 million), waiving FIF interest fees (\$10 million) as well as apiary and wild dog border fence fees (\$10 million).

*“This drought has lasted far longer than anyone expected and is now having a real sting on cash flow and cost of living. The best thing we as a Government can do is to limit the amount of cashing we’re taking from farmers at this difficult time,” Mr Marshall said.*

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<sup>1</sup> Delivering on a commitment to top up the Farm Innovation Fund \$350 million.

### **Transport subsidies - \$70 million**

Subsidies to assist landholders to transport stock, fodder and water. The NSW Government will offer a transport subsidy of up to \$40,000 per eligible farm business. The subsidy can cover 50% of the full cost of freight up to a maximum of \$5 per kilometre (+GST). This would assist a cattle farmer in Dubbo, for example, to purchase a truck-load of hay from outside Bordertown, South Australia.

*“With ongoing dry conditions landholders are having to look further afield to source much needed fodder to keep their stocks alive. This can be an expensive exercise and that’s why the NSW Government is tipping in cash to reduce the cost for farmers and removing any kilometre barriers that previously existed,” Mr Marshall said.*

### **Emergency water carting - \$15 million**

Emergency relief is available to Local Water Utilities towards the cost of water carting or water supply works during periods of emergency.

### **What’s new in this package?**

- No new paperwork for people who have already accessed drought assistance<sup>2</sup>
- Farm Innovation Fund loans increased from up to \$500,000 to \$1 million
- No minimum or maximum distance caps on transport subsidy claims
- Extension to the loan term of the Drought Assistance Fund and expanding the purpose of the loan to include activities that promote profitability and resilience.

*“I’ve talked to countless farmers about what’s working and what’s not working in the current package and that’s why we’ve made a number of changes to our assistance measures to ensure they’re having the maximum impact,” Mr Marshall said.*

*“A key focus has been streamlining the application process for farmers to take the difficulty out of accessing the assistance they need. With conditions as tough as they are, farmers simply don’t have the time to be filling out duplicative piles of paperwork.”*

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<sup>2</sup> Evidence will still be required for financial loans.