



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

MEDIA RELEASE

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DROUGHT: \$750 MILLION MORE SUPPORT FOR FARMERS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

NORTHERN Tablelands MP and Minister for Agriculture, Adam Marshall today announced a further \$750 million to boost support for farmers and rural communities across drought ravaged regional NSW.

Mr Marshall said today's extra \$355 million was in addition to the almost \$400 million committed during the March election campaign, bringing total State Government support for drought to \$1.8 billion.

"The impact of this drought is being felt everywhere and by everyone right across country NSW," Mr Marshall said.

"It's hurting our farmers, but also our local businesses, schools and people's overall mental health – there's been no decent rain and cash is also running dry.

"Today's new drought assistance package recognises the challenges on the land and the fact that 97 per cent of the State is still in the grip of drought or intense drought conditions.

"The best drought support is rain and lots of it, but while no government can make it rain, this new and additional funding is the next best thing.

"The new package provides targeted support to assist with cash flow issues on farm, reduce the cost of doing business, help retain breeding herds with more help to transport stock and fodder, support regional communities and build resilience in our rural sector.

"While droughts are a natural part of doing business on the land, this drought is unique and I'm confident this package will help alleviate the some of the burden associated with one of the worst droughts in living memory."

The extension of emergency drought support for farmers and funding to fast track investment in rural and regional infrastructure will all be funded in next week's 2019/20 NSW Budget and start on 1 July.

Mr Marshall said that more than 140,000 farmers across the State had already benefited from the government's drought support and that no farmer who had successfully applied for assistance in the past would be required to lodge another application.

In the Northern Tablelands, around 12,000 farmers have received support through the various fee waivers, subsidies, grants and no interest loans.

“We want to make it as easy as possible for farmers to access this new assistance,” Mr Marshall said.

“Our farmers are already stretched and filling out applications takes hours of their time they simply don’t have.

“If you’ve already successfully accessed assistance from the Rural Assistance Authority in the past and your circumstances haven’t changed, you won’t have to fill out another application.”

Under today’s announcement, \$170 million in Budget funding will go towards fast-track regional infrastructure projects.

An additional \$535 million in Budget funding will go towards on-farm drought support measures, including:

- \$70 million for transport subsidies (stock, fodder and water);
- \$50 million to waive Local Land Services rates;
- \$30 million to waive fixed charges for NSW Water Licences;
- \$15 million for emergency water carting;
- \$350 million boost to the Farm Innovation Fund, which also provides the no-interest loans which will now be able to be used for any farm productivity activities and costs; and
- \$10 million to waive interest charges for Farm Innovation Fund loans.

For further information about NSW Government drought support measures, visit www.droughthub.nsw.gov.au

Photo Caption: Adam Marshall MP and Aberfoyle cattle and sheep farmer Callan Schaefer discuss the impact of drought on land holders at Guyra.

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