



# The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

## Minister for Primary Industries

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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Tuesday 10 February 2015

#### **GOL GOL PRODUCERS ELIGIBLE FOR STORM RELIEF GRANTS**

NSW Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson today announced that one-off \$10,000 Disaster Reimbursement Grants would be made available for producers in the Wentworth Shire Council affected by last November's severe wind and hail storm.

"Following the storm late last year, I immediately declared a number of parishes as an Agricultural Natural Disaster Area," Minister Hodgkinson said.

"This ensured that low interest loans were instantly available for affected producers to replace or repair property and farm infrastructure damaged by the storm.

"Now, in addition to the low interest loans, eligible producers will be able to access a one-off, Disaster Reimbursement Grant to help with the costs of recovery."

The NSW Government has written to the Federal Government to request support for the provision of financial assistance to the Wentworth Local Government Area (LGA).

However in the absence of being able to formally announce a Natural Disaster Declaration, the NSW Government has decided to provide support on this occasion, so that it can be expedited.

The NSW Government remains hopeful the Commonwealth will provide support to match the costs to the State.

The Minister said under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA), the November storms did not meet the minimum trigger of \$240,000 in damage to public infrastructure, meaning NSW was unable to make a Natural Disaster Declaration.

"We have seen almost a third of all producers affected and an estimated damage bill of \$18.8 million," said Ms Hodgkinson.

"However, because the affected towns have significantly less public infrastructure than a typical major town, and in light of the significant long-term damage to agriculture crops, the NSW Government has treated this as a one-off temporary emergency circumstance and has increased the financial assistance available to producers."

Member for Murray-Darling John Williams welcomed the funding.

"This is great news for our citrus producers," Mr Williams said.

These reimbursement grants will be available for eligible producers to apply for from Thursday February 12, to assist growers get back on their feet.

The NSW Government will fund the Disaster reimbursement Grants and producers will be able to apply through the Rural Assistance Authority.

To be eligible for reimbursement, producers will be required to submit tax invoices or receipts for any works carried out.

For more information or to apply, contact the Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593.