



**Andrew Stoner MP**  
Deputy Premier

**Katrina Hodgkinson MP**  
Minister for Primary Industries

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Thursday 19 June 2014

### **MORE FUNDING FOR DROUGHT-AFFECTED FARMERS**

Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner and Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, have today announced \$13 million in new funding to support the rollout of the new national drought program, commencing on 1 July 2014.

The **\$13 million funding package** includes:

- **\$8 million** for the popular **Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate** (plus up to **\$4 million** from the Commonwealth Government);
- **\$1.9 million** to continue the **Rural Support Worker Program**;
- **\$2.5 million** to continue the **Country Town Emergency Water Cartage and Infrastructure Scheme**; and
- **\$350,000** for additional staff at the **Rural Assistance Authority (RAA)**, to support the rollout of the new national program.

This is in addition to ongoing NSW Government drought support, which includes:

- continuation of the **Farm Innovation Fund**, to provide farmers with loans at concessional interest rates for in-drought support and drought preparedness;
- **\$840,000** for the NSW Government's ongoing commitment to the **Rural Financial Counselling Service**; and
- funding for animal welfare cases, focused on stock going to sale or slaughter where there is significant risk to animal welfare.

Mr Stoner said the nationally agreed program provides long-term support to help farmers prepare for and manage the impacts of drought.

"The national program brings together a range of State-based and national measures, including family support and taxation measures and support for the delivery of new on-farm water infrastructure projects," Mr Stoner said.

"The NSW Government is firmly committed to supporting our farmers to prepare for and cope with drought when it strikes, demonstrated by the fact we have allocated more than \$30 million to temporary emergency assistance measures since last November."

Ms Hodgkinson said additional funding of \$8 million has been provided to the popular Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate, to which the Commonwealth Government will contribute up to \$4 million.

"This is a great program – it helps farmers deal with the in-crisis issue of providing water to livestock, while also enabling them to also install crucial infrastructure to better cope with future droughts," Ms Hodgkinson.

“Under the program, grants of up to \$50,000 per producer will be available to help farmers install on-farm water infrastructure, including bores and water troughs.

“By 30 June 2014 the RAA will have already paid \$9 million to more than 800 drought-affected farmers through this program.

“Applications are being processed in the order of receipt and applications received in the 2013-14 financial year will be rolled over to the new financial year.

“Due to the popularity of the program, funding for the 2014-15 period is already close to being fully subscribed, so I strongly urge interested landholders to contact the RAA before undertaking any works.”

Ms Hodgkinson said the measures are supported by a series of Commonwealth programs, administered by the NSW Government.

“Funding for debt management, drought works and pest management will flow to farmers through the Commonwealth’s Drought Concessional Loans Scheme – administered through the NSW Rural Assistance Authority – and the \$2.4 million pest management fund,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

Ms Hodgkinson said the NSW Government’s temporary emergency assistance package concludes on 30 June 2014.

“In line with the roll out of the national program, these measures, including the Transport Assistance Reimbursement and a six-month waiver of Local Land Services rates, will expire on the 30 June 2014,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“It is important that our continuing support measures are in line with the Intergovernmental Agreement on National Drought Program Reform, which the Commonwealth signed with all States and Territories last May.”

Information about NSW Government support, and technical advice, is available at [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/emergency/drought](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/emergency/drought), and further information about the national drought program is available at [www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/drought](http://www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/drought).