



The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

Minister for Primary Industries

MEDIA RELEASE

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SUGAR CANE GROWERS SWEETEN FLOOD PREPARATIONS

NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson and candidate for Ballina Kris Beavis announced a new initiative in Ballina today to ensure North Coast sugar cane growers are better prepared for future floods.

Ms Hodgkinson said the highly anticipated Flood Ready Cane Farming Strategic Plan had been developed to strengthen the capacity of the cane industry to manage future floods.

“It is important to reduce the impact and costs of floods on infrastructure, farm productivity, farm families and regional sugar production,” said Ms Hodgkinson.

“Over the past five years, the NSW North Coast has been hit hard by a number of major flood events that have impacted greatly on the cane industry.

Candidate for Ballina Kris Beavis said that extensive flooding in 2013 caused regional damage to the cane industry, costing growers around \$69 million and leading to a 60 per cent drop in production.

“The Flood Ready Cane Farming Strategic Plan will make a significant difference to ensure we are better prepared for future floods,” said Mr Beavis.

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) led the development of the new Plan in consultation with NSW Cane Growers, NSW Sugar Milling Cooperative, farmers, local government, local floodplain authorities, SES and Local Land Services.

Ms Hodgkinson said the plan identified key risks and provides management strategies and practices that can be used to better prepare farm enterprises and farm families.

“The goal is to maintain the sustainability of the sugar cane industry, maintain the productivity of the production systems and ensure the security of the cane supply to the local mills and the sugar refinery,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“The plan builds resilience through developing connections at the local and regional level and the commitment from farmers, industry, local emergency groups and key government service providers to implement the plan.

“The release of this plan builds on the release in October last year of the Flood Ready Dairying Strategic Plan.

“We want individuals and businesses to be able to recover quickly and return to normal operations after flood events.”

The Flood Ready Cane Farming Strategic Plan delivers on Goal 1 of the NSW Agriculture Industry Action Plan launched last year to build a responsive and flexible industry.