



Niall Blair

Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Lands and Water

Mark Speakman

Minister for the Environment
Minister for Heritage

MEDIA RELEASE

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BIG BOOST TO FLYING FOX NETTING PROGRAM

Primary Industries, Lands and Water Minister Niall Blair and Environment Minister Mark Speakman today announced an additional \$1 million to continue the successful Flying Fox Netting Program, helping farmers to protect their crops and to grow the state's booming cider industry.

More fruit growers across the State's premier fruit growing regions including the Central West, South West and North Coast, in addition to the Sydney Basin, have benefited from the program that has resulted in them now being better protected from flying fox damage.

Mr Blair said that across the Sydney Basin's fruit growing region, the flying fox nets had been a great success.

"Already in regions, like Bilpin to the west of Sydney, farmers have taken advantage of this practical and affordable program, since last year, to keep flying foxes away from crops.

"This program's popularity increased dramatically since it has been rolled out across the entire state," Mr Blair said.

"One of the beneficiaries, the state's cider industry is expected to grow by 20 per cent over the next five years. I am proud to be working with farmers to find new and innovative ways to reduce the impacts of flying foxes on the State's orchards."

Mr Speakman said that the additional funding builds on the previous commitment of \$5 million announced for both throw-over netting as well as fully secured netting.

"The funding boost will allow more farmers across the state to install crucial flying fox netting," Mr Speakman said.

"The grey-headed flying fox is listed as vulnerable under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act and also under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

"This solution balances the critical ecological need to protect a native species with the needs to protect crops.

"This program is available across the whole of NSW and meets half the cost of installing netting for eligible properties, capped at \$20,000 per hectare."

The program assists commercial orchardists mitigate flying fox damage and eliminate the need to issue shooting licenses by installing new exclusion netting and infrastructure upgrades to bring existing non-compliant netting up to standard.

The announcement of additional funding delivers on a key part of the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government's Memorandum of Understanding with NSW Farmers to continue to support the flying fox netting program.