



# The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

## Minister for Primary Industries

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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Monday 1 December 2014

### **DISASTER ASSISTANCE NOW AVAILABLE FOR SUNRAYSIA STORM LOSSES**

Primary producers in parts of the Wentworth Local Government Area affected by a severe wind and hail storm on 22 November 2014 will now have access to Agricultural Natural Disaster Relief Assistance, Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson said today.

"The severe storm event caused more than \$12 million damage in parts of the Sunraysia area, and affected at least 100 rural properties," Ms Hodgkinson said.

The Parishes of Neilpo, Tiltao, Dean, Wentworth, Mourquong, Gol Gol, Cliffs, Paringi, Thitto and North Cowl within the County of Wentworth have been declared as an agricultural natural disaster area to help affected farmers repair their properties and restore their business.

"Many producers in the area have been hit hard by the storm, which not only inflicted extensive damage to farm infrastructure, but caused significant losses to valuable horticultural and grain crops," said Ms Hodgkinson.

In addition to reports of significant damage to farm sheds, trellis and netting material, approximate crop losses include:

- 1000 hectares of table grapes and wine grapes in fruit development stage;
- 790ha of citrus trees;
- 20ha eggplants and capsicums;
- 20ha melon plants;
- mature grain crop; and
- five hectares developed avocados.

Member for Murray-Darling, John Williams, urged affected producers to apply for assistance via the NSW Rural Assistance Authority (RAA).

"The assistance comes in the form of loans of up to \$130,000, at 1.92 per cent interest per annum, with a two year interest and repayment free period," Mr Williams said.

"The low interest loans provide for replacement or repairs to property and farm infrastructure which was damaged by the storm event."

Transport subsidies are also available to primary producers as part of the NSW Natural Disaster Arrangements. Transport subsidies are to assist with the transport of fodder and/or water to a property, stock to/from agistment and stock to sale or slaughter. Assistance is up to 50% of the total freight cost to a maximum of \$15,000 per farm enterprise per financial year.

Potential applicants should contact the RAA on 1800 678 593 or visit [www.raa.nsw.gov.au](http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au) to clarify eligibility criteria, or any other issues relating to this assistance.