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Natural disaster assistance for farmers affected by western NSW dust storm

Western Division farmers affected by a severe dust storm on 21 and 22 September can now apply for Natural Disaster Assistance, NSW Minister for Primary Industries Ian Macdonald said today.

Minister Macdonald said high winds carried huge volumes of soil from South Australia east across NSW, with dust blanketing much of the State.

“Sydneysiders woke up to images they are likely never to forget -red streets and towns, a red Harbour Bridge and Opera House - but major damage was caused closer to the source of the storm”.

“Large amounts of highly abrasive fine sand blasted vegetation, covered infrastructure and destroyed stock,” Mr Macdonald said.

NSW Minister for Lands Tony Kelly noted that more than \$318,000 in stock losses had been reported in this area, with the death of 2,330 sheep and 30 cattle.

“Repair costs to excavate sand from water points, troughs, stock yards and fences are expected to be at least \$439,000,” Minister Kelly said.

“Farmers in the Central Darling Shire and unincorporated far west areas to the north and west of the Shire are eligible to apply for assistance, although the main area affected is north of Broken Hill and east to White Cliffs,” he said.

Affected landholders can now apply for Natural Disaster Relief Assistance through the NSW Rural Assistance Authority on 1 800 678 593.

“The assistance comes in the form of loans of up to \$130,000, at 2.85 per cent interest per annum with a two-year interest free and repayment free period,” Minister Macdonald said.

“These loans are for the repair or replacement of property and infrastructure, including damage to pasture and crops.”
