



Niall Blair
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Regional Water
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MEDIA RELEASE

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DROUGHT AND CLIMATE CHANGE KEY PRIORITIES FOR NSW AT AGMIN

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) State Seasonal Update for January shows that drought conditions across NSW have re-intensified in the west of the state, prolonging what is already a severe event for many producers.

Minister for Primary Industries, Niall Blair said that despite some storms and an easing of the drought on the east coast, 99.8 per cent of NSW remains in drought.

“We know this will come as no surprise to regional communities across NSW but we also know the lack of forecast rain is making the situation for producers extremely dire,” Mr Blair said.

“Numerous records were broken in January where some areas observed the lowest January rainfall totals in more than a century, while other areas received their lowest totals in 20 years.

“Heat records were also broken, with 90 per cent of NSW experiencing the warmest January in history. This heatwave has exacerbated the effects of the ongoing drought and further compromised the ability of areas that have received rainfall to make any significant improvements.

“Today at AGMIN, drought will be a significant issue raised and I will also be promoting the work NSW is doing to undertake climate change research within the agriculture sector.

“Currently in NSW, we have a \$29.2 million *Climate Change Research Strategy* which is made up of seven targeted projects, looking at clean energy solutions, emission reduction pathways and making our sector more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

“We will also be discussing how all States and the Commonwealth can better address how a changing climate is impacting our land and environment.

“Here in NSW we will continue to look at the science, use new technology and find more ways to make our sector more adaptable. We know that there will be future droughts and the only way we can limit the impact is to start preparing for the future more effectively.”

Approximately 36 per cent of NSW is in *Intense Drought*, 44 per cent is in *Drought* and

18 per cent is *Drought Affected*.

Summer storms have created highly variable field conditions within and between regions. Some areas in the Northern and Central Tablelands were exposed to intense storm activity that provided 20-year record-breaking rainfall. Unfortunately, the high rainfall intensities and compromised infiltration rates meant this rainfall was not effective for soil water recharge and pasture response.

The extreme heat has also had an impact on the little area of summer crop that was planted, while placing further pressure on stock water reserves, which remain critically low.

The Bureau of Meteorology outlook for February to April indicates a near equal chance of wetter or drier than average rainfall conditions across NSW and an increased chance of warmer than average daytime and overnight temperatures.

The latest State Seasonal Update is available on www.droughthub.nsw.gov.au

For more information on the NSW Primary Industries Climate Change Research Strategy, visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/ccrs

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