



Mike Baird MP

Premier of NSW

Minister for Infrastructure

Minister for Western Sydney

MEDIA RELEASE

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ENCOURAGING FARM INNOVATION: NSW GOVERNMENT UNVEILS \$300 MILLION DROUGHT PACKAGE

The Baird Government has unveiled a \$300 million drought package focussed on supporting primary producers in NSW to become more resilient and better prepared for future drought conditions.

The NSW Drought Package was announced in Tamworth today by NSW Premier Mike Baird, Deputy Premier Troy Grant, Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson and Member for Tamworth Kevin Anderson.

The measures will include extension of the popular Farm Innovation Fund and short term emergency support for primary producers in the midst of drought.

“I have seen the devastating impact drought can have on our primary producers and I understand the challenges faced by regional and rural communities,” Mr Baird said.

“During my last visit to drought affected areas of NSW, I committed to ensuring our farmers receive the support they need from the NSW Government and we are delivering on that commitment.

“Our policy provides short term assistance for those in need, but also puts in place a long-term, fully-funded strategy to enable primary producers to become more resilient and productive, which will lead to greater output from our regional economies.

“This builds on more than \$60 million in direct financial assistance to farmers provided by the NSW Government in the last 18 months,” Mr Baird said.

Mr Grant said the package would deliver a more transparent and targeted system of drought support, including \$250 million in low interest loans over five years to continue the popular Farm Innovation Fund.

“The Farm Innovation Fund was a first under the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government and I’m pleased it has benefitted our farmers and agribusinesses with upgrades and investment in agricultural technology,” Mr Grant said.

“We have been listening to our regional communities and are delivering the vital support they need to survive drought, including a further \$366 million under our Water Security for Regions program.”

Ms Hodgkinson said the initiative would provide key assistance measures for primary producers over the next five years.

“The package delivers on several goals of the NSW Agriculture Industry Action Plan, launched last year – including maintaining a responsive and flexible industry and ensuring a profitable and productive industry in NSW,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“It will include \$45 million over five years in scholarships for farmers to undertake vocational training and farm business planning to prepare for future droughts.”

Mr Anderson said local farmers experiencing drought conditions would benefit from the new raft of support measures.

“The Baird Government has announced this package after listening to the concerns of primary producers across the State,” he said.

“Primary producers can be confident they will be supported in times of need and encouraged to upgrade in farm technologies to be more productive into the future.”

The NSW Drought Package delivers a range of initiatives including:

- \$250 million in low interest loans over five years to continue the Farm Innovation Fund – providing concessional loans to primary producers to prepare for future drought.
- \$45 million over five years in scholarships for farmers to undertake vocational training and farm business planning to prepare for future droughts.
- \$5 million over five years to provide transport assistance for animal welfare and donated fodder within NSW.
- \$2.5 million to work with the Bureau of Meteorology to develop an enhanced network of weather stations across NSW.
- Work with the Commonwealth Government and farming communities to develop a commercial multi-peril insurance product for the cropping sector.
- Ongoing investment in research and development through the Department of Primary Industries.