



Niall Blair

Minister for Primary Industries

Minister for Lands and Water

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW BUDGET: \$90 MILLION FOR DROUGHT STRATEGY

Farming businesses will be given help to deal with the impact of drought, with more than \$90 million allocated to the NSW Drought Strategy in the 2016-17 Budget.

Minister for Primary Industries and Minister for Lands and Water Niall Blair said the NSW Government is committed to supporting our farmers to prepare for and manage business risks, like droughts.

“We’ve committed to providing more than \$300 million to farm businesses through our NSW Drought Strategy through until 2019-20 – this year’s \$93.2 million investment is our continued delivery on that commitment,” Mr Blair said.

“Already this strategy has enabled a range of practical support for farmers – including critical funding for the installation of common-sense permanent infrastructure like fodder storage, stock and domestic water supply, and fencing.”

Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian said the \$93.2 million allocation included \$80 million for the Farm Innovation Fund – a \$30 million increase on previously allocated funding due to high demand.

“It is important for everyone across the State to experience the benefits of a strong Budget, and our farmers deserve our support as they are a crucial part of our rural and regional economies,” Ms Berejiklian said.

The Farm Innovation Fund provides long-term low-interest loans to farm businesses to install or upgrade permanent on-farm infrastructure. \$67.7 million has been approved under this fund in 2015-16.

The \$93.2 million commitment also includes:

- \$9 million for farmers to undertake vocational training and farm business planning to prepare for future droughts under the Farm Business Skills Professional Development Program.
- \$2 million to partner with the Bureau of Meteorology to develop an enhanced network of weather stations across NSW.
- \$1.2 million to provide transport assistance for animal welfare and donated fodder within NSW.
- \$1 million for Rural Support Workers to support drought-affected farmers and rural communities.

The NSW Government has also committed to ongoing support for the jointly funded Rural Financial Counselling Service, and will continue to administer the Commonwealth Government’s Drought Concessional Loans Scheme.

MEDIA: Siobhan McCarthy | Minister Blair | 0407 791 802