



John Barilaro

Deputy Premier
Minister for Regional NSW
Minister for Industry and Trade

Dominic Perrottet

Treasurer

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW MEASURES ANNOUNCED TO FIGHT TOMORROW'S DROUGHT TODAY

The battle against the next drought begins today with the NSW Government announcing a combined \$64 million in the 2021-22 NSW Budget over four years for the 'Future Ready Regions' strategy that will help farmers and regional communities grow, thrive and plan for the future.

Deputy Premier John Barilaro, Treasurer Dominic Perrottet and Member for Dubbo Dugald Saunders were at Boxleigh Park Merinos in Wellington today to meet with local farmers and make the announcement.

"It feels like just yesterday the entire state was in drought with towns running out of water, crops failing to reach harvest and farmers making heartbreaking decisions between feeding livestock or feeding their families," Mr Barilaro said.

"These are the lessons we cannot afford to forget and will be enshrined in the Future Ready Regions strategy to make sure our communities are ready when the next drought hits.

"The initiatives in this brand new strategy, like increasing on-farm ag tech and vastly improving weather and climate data, will build more resilient regional communities, increase investment in water security and enable farmers to make more informed business decisions."

Mr Perrottet said the Future Ready Regions strategy was built on the experiences and lessons learnt from the worst drought on record, which identified priorities and opportunities to future-proof regional NSW.

"This is about ensuring our regional communities, farmers and primary industries are prepared for future economic shocks and empowering them with new tools, training and better data to plan and inform decision-making," Mr Perrottet said.

"We will also undertake large scale aerial surveys of western NSW to identify potential new water sources and underground storages to reduce pressure on other supplies during drought, upgrade the Enhanced Drought Information System and help farmers develop business plans for drought as well as the good years."

Member for Dubbo Dugald Saunders said he's looking forward to the new strategy building on the current NSW Government support.

"It's great to see this new strategy build on the NSW Governments enormous investment in preparing communities for drought including the popular \$1 billion Farm Innovation Fund, helping farmers invest a range of projects to improve farm productivity, manage adverse seasonal conditions, and ensure long term sustainability," Mr Saunders said.

“Primary producers I talk to are definitely keen to have planning and support in place for future dry times. The ability to utilise technology and diversify income into the future is also important, and I’m really pleased we’ve developed this new package.”

New initiatives in the Future Ready Regions strategy include:

- \$48 million to expand the Farms of the Future program to accelerate the adoption of “ag-tech” enabled production methods which make farms more efficient, profitable and resilient.
- \$6 million to fast track investigations into potential groundwater supplies in Western NSW.
- \$6 million to deliver a new ‘Farm Business Resilience Planning’ pilot.
- \$4 million to upgrade the Enhanced Drought Information System (EDIS) to provide farms with world-leading weather and climate data so they can make better business decisions.
- Support farm businesses and other landholders to diversify their income through carbon farming and biodiversity offset programs.
- Streamline planning requirements to make it easier for primary producers to diversify into agritourism and carry out agricultural programs.

For more information on Future Ready Regions, visit:
nsw.gov.au/FutureReadyRegions

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