



NATIONALS for Regional NSW

Austin Evans MP

MEMBER FOR MURRAY



MEDIA RELEASE

30 July 2018

MORE THAN \$1BILLION FOR OUR STATES DROUGHT STRICKEN FARMERS

Member for Murray Austin Evans has today welcomed the NSW Government's \$500 million Emergency Drought Relief Package, which will help farmers right across the Murray electorate.

This package now takes the Government's drought support to more than \$1 billion, with \$584 million announced in June 2018.

With 99 per cent of the state now in drought and farmers facing one of the driest winters on record, we know this package is essential not just for our farmers but the continued productivity of our regional communities.

Mr Evans said the severity of the drought across the state has resulted in failing crops, drastic water shortages and a diminishing supply of fodder to sustain livestock.

"A major feature of this package is the introduction of transport subsidies, this measure recognises the fact that in many areas people have been forced to cart fodder because the local supply is drying up," Mr Evans said.

"We will also backdate this measure to earlier in the year when we began to see conditions deteriorate.

"As part of the emergency funding, waivers will apply on Local Land Services annual rates, fixed charges on water licences, registration costs for class 1 agricultural vehicles and interest for existing Farm Innovation Fund loans."

"I still encourage people to access the Drought Assistance Loans which have now totalled more than \$14 million in applications."

The Emergency Relief Package provides key support in priority areas including:

- Drought Transport Subsidies; (Subsidies will be back-dated to include an additional prorated amount for expenses incurred in the previous six months. Up to 50% of the full cost of transporting fodder, livestock to agistment, slaughter, sale and water for stock will be made available to eligible farmers.)
- Waived Local Land Services annual rates, fixed water charges in rural and regional areas, as well as class 1 agricultural vehicle registration;
- Support services including counselling and mental health;



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- Community assistance including water cartage and drought-related road infrastructure improvements;
- Animal welfare and stock disposal.

The Government will also allocate an additional \$150 million to the Farm Innovation Fund, reflecting significant uptake by farmers across the State.

The NSW Rural Assistance Authority will begin processing applications from Monday August 6. For more information on the NSW Government's emergency drought relief package visit www.droughthub.nsw.gov.au.

ENDS

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