



MEDIA RELEASE

Increased drought support for New England

07 Nov 2019

Drought-hit farmers, small businesses and rural towns are set for an immediate cash injection to keep stock fed and watered, keep businesses open, keep locals in work and pump funds into local economies.

Member for New England, Barnaby Joyce, said the latest funding was the end result of persistent advocacy on behalf of his constituents.

“I have been fighting for and now received a large contribution especially for the New England and Upper Hunter which is completely in drought and therefore should have absolute access to these measures announced today,” Mr Joyce said.

The latest funding, he added, would provide relief to farmers as well as vital economic stimulus for the New England through the Drought Communities Program.

“This is not only a drought for people on the land, it’s a drought for people in the towns,” Mr Joyce said.

“That’s why I’m glad to see another million dollars for every council in the New England providing projects already delivered under the drought program such as the fire control centre upgrade at Quirindi, upgrades to the Kempsey Road at Armidale or new showground facilities at Walcha, which have provided the support our town economies need.”

The Prime Minister said the Coalition Government’s next step of measures to combat the drought’s impact was ready to flow.

“We are stepping up our drought response once again to meet the increasing needs as the drought’s effects also step up,” the Prime Minister said.

“Since the budget we have already committed an additional \$355 million to step up our drought response. Today’s announcement triples this to more than \$1 billion since the election, as well as more than \$1 billion in new interest free loans, to see people through.

“This is money into the pockets of all those farmers and graziers who know they have a future, but are currently struggling to keep their operations running as the crippling effects of this drought continue to bite that we’ve heard from out on the ground. They are backing themselves and we are

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Hon **Barnaby Joyce** MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR NEW ENGLAND

backing them to make it through to the better days that will be ahead.”

New Federal Government measures announced:

- Extra \$122 million for drought support to local councils - including all 10 in New England - to build local infrastructure, support jobs and regional economies
- Extra \$138.9 million for additional Roads to Recovery funding
- New and existing drought loans will be interest free for 2 years to pay for immediate expenses like fodder, freight and wages. Years 3-5 will be interest-only
- New loans worth up to \$500,000 each for small businesses dependent on agriculture to pay staff, buy equipment and refinance existing debt, also interest-free for 2 years.
- \$10 million to support schools facing financial hardship as a result of ongoing drought conditions
- \$5 million from the Community Child Care Fund will help assist centres that are experiencing decreased demand and financial pressure due to families from drought-affected areas being unable to pay for child care
- Redirecting \$200 million into a Building Better Regions Fund special drought round, providing up to \$10 million per project in local government areas
- 100 gigalitres of water from South Australia will be used to grow up to 120,000 tonnes of fodder as well as silage and pasture to secure supplies for the months ahead

(ENDS)

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