



# NEWS

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## NSW flood victim thrown a life-line

The NSW Farmers Association has welcomed today's announcement by Minister for Primary Industries Ian Macdonald that the NSW Government has revised the process for applying for flood assistance for farmers in Central West and Northern NSW.

NSW Farmer' Association President Jock Laurie says many farmers were in jeopardy of missing the cut-off date, because of issues out their control.

"Farmers will now be able to apply for assistance using estimates for repair work to fencing and earthworks, rather than actual cost," Mr Laurie said.

"While the damage occurred several weeks ago, many are still having trouble getting the repair work done due to weather condition and the availability of contractors in the areas affected," Mr Laurie said.

However, at the Executive Council meeting in Parkes today delegates agreed the grant of \$5000 for NSW flood victims doesn't go far enough.

"Severe flooding occurred in NSW as it did in Queensland, yet those over the border can apply for up to five times the assistance," Mr Laurie said.

Immediately after the floods in Central West and Northern NSW late last year and early 2008, the Association worked closely with the NSW Department of Primary Industries to gain information about the extent of the damage through the Government's Flood Hotline.

"Initially, more than 450 calls were received in the Central West, reporting damage to 5000 kilometres of fence lines, 80 houses, 150 sheds, 8500 sheep and 560 cattle," Mr Laurie said.

"Over 140 calls came in from the North Coast, reporting damage to 213 kilometres of fences, 7 houses, 15 sheds, 251 cattle and 1669 hectares crop (corn, soy bean, sugar cane, sorghum).

The grants are available for clean-up and immediate restoration costs including costs associated with damage to farm buildings, crops, livestock, fences equipment and other infrastructure, and are not intended to cover loss of business income, or to replace insurance.

The deadline for applications is 28 March, 2008.

Eligible farmers may apply for assistance under the Natural Disaster Relief Scheme which provides a loan of up to \$130 000 at a concessional interest rate of 2.85% which is fixed for the term of the loan.

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