



MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES  
MINISTER FOR ENERGY  
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR STATE DEVELOPMENT

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### NSW Government extends support for desperate farmers

The NSW Government will extend its support for drought weary farming communities as they head into the dry summer months, Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald said today.

“Recent widespread rain and high yields from crops in many areas have raised some farmers’ spirits, but until the drought finally ends ongoing support will be critical with well over half the state drought declared,” Minister Macdonald said.

“The drought transport subsidy due to end this week will now continue until 28 February, 2009 with an additional \$3.84 million committed to vital drought support measures, taking the State Government’s assistance package past the \$450 million mark.

“This extension will allow farmers in drought affected areas to continue to receive a 50 per cent subsidy on the transport of fodder, stock to sale, stock for agistment and stock and domestic water.

“By the end of next February the NSW Government will have committed more than \$140 million dollars in transport subsidies since the start of the drought in 2002.

“We are happy to extend this very practical drought assistance measure as it is widely used by the farmers most in need.”

Minister Macdonald said funding for drought support workers across NSW and their community activities would be extended for a further six months.

“This will allow the drought support workers to continue running farm family gatherings until the end of June next year,” he said.

“These events provide a vital social outlet for many people isolated on their farms.

“The gatherings are a rare opportunity for farm families to get together, provide moral support to each other and perhaps even forget their drought worries for a short time.

“Rural financial counsellors and agencies providing assistance also attend farm family gatherings to supply information on their services.

“The recent winning of a gold award and the major award in the Premier’s Public Sector Awards by the drought support worker team is a demonstration of the team’s value and the esteem in which it is held.”

Minister Macdonald said rain was desperately needed in the south and south-western regions.

“The outlook between now and the end of January indicate the chance of receiving average rainfall is only 50 per cent,” he said.

“Above average rainfall is needed in these areas to break the drought, indicating that much of NSW is likely to remain severely drought affected over summer.

“The worst affected areas are in the central and south western regions, parts of which are also battling plagues of locusts.

“The NSW Government has pledged its’ support for our farmers since the onset of the drought and will continue to do so.

Information on drought transport subsidies is available by calling 1800 814 647 or visiting [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/emergency/drought](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/emergency/drought)

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