



The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Small Business

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, 9 January 2012

**ASSISTANCE PACKAGE FOR LAKE COWAL AND WIRRINYA
PRODUCERS**

Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson has announced disaster assistance measures for producers in the Wurrinya and Lake Cowal areas whose farm operations were impacted by severe storms and flooding.

“A series of heavy localised storms moved through the area between 21 and 30 November and caused flooding and \$1.3 million in damage to local farm operations,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“Fifteen properties across 3,500 hectares were impacted by the severe storms and local flooding and the region has now been declared an agricultural natural disaster area.

“The storms caused widespread crop losses, with approximately 2,900 hectares of winter cereals completely destroyed.

“The storms also destroyed 300 hectares of pasture, stored fodder and caused widespread damage to farm infrastructure, including 7.5 kilometres of fencing, internal roads and irrigation channels.”

Ms Hodgkinson urged affected producers to apply for assistance via the NSW Rural Assistance Authority (RAA).

“The assistance will be in the form of loans of up to \$130,000, at 2.67 per cent interest per annum, with a two year interest and repayment free period,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“The loans will allow producers to repair their damaged property and replace affected farm infrastructure.

“Transport Subsidy Support may also be available for eligible producers. The subsidy provides a 50 per cent transport rebate for transporting fodder to affected stock or transporting stock to and from agistment.”

Potential applicants should contact the RAA toll-free on 1800 678 593 or visit www.raa.nsw.gov.au to clarify eligibility criteria, or any other issues relating to this assistance.