

Tuesday, 18 June 2019

REGIONAL NSW SET FOR INFRASTRUCTURE TRANSFORMATION

Regional communities and drought-stricken farmers are at the heart of the 2019-20 NSW Budget with the NSW Government expanding emergency drought support measures, increasing funding for regional roads and water security, and investing record amounts in mobile and data connectivity.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW John Barilaro said that this Budget commits \$355 million for drought assistance, which includes \$170 million for a Drought Stimulus Package and \$185 million to continue existing on-farm support to boost economic resilience in the face of current severe drought conditions.

Mr Barilaro said today's Budget delivers on the NSW Government's regional election commitments, including funding to kick start the 5-year commitments of \$500 million to repair and replace worn out wooden bridges, \$500 million to repair, maintain and seal local roads, \$400 million for regional digital connectivity from the Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund and a \$100 million boost to the Stronger Country Communities Fund.

"The drought continues to impact farmers, businesses and people living across our regions, and the Budget measures announced today will stimulate local economies, build the infrastructure our regions need and secure town water supply," Mr Barilaro said.

"The Regional Growth Fund has been topped up to \$1.7 billion, allowing the NSW Government to run a further round of the popular Stronger Country Communities Fund.

"Up to half of the \$100 million available this year will be dedicated to regional youth infrastructure and programs, focused on building community involvement, wellbeing and getting our young people ready for work.

"This Budget commits Snowy Hydro funds to projects for the first time, meeting our election commitments to deliver digital connectivity where people live and work, improve water security, and establish Special Activation Precincts that attract jobs and investment," Mr Barilaro said.

Highlights from the 2019-20 Budget for regional NSW include:

- **\$170 million** to fast track critical water and infrastructure projects.
- **\$100 million** expansion of the Stronger Country Communities fund.
- **\$90 million** to boost mobile coverage and internet connectivity.
- **\$37.5 million** over three years to extend the Wild Dog Fence in Western New South Wales to prevent wild dogs entering the State.
- **\$32 million** over three years to investigate the feasibility of raising Wyangala Dam wall.
- **\$20 million** for business cases and technical studies to investigate Special Activation Precincts.

- **\$8 million** for Country Universities Centres, to establish at least five more regional centres.
- **\$3 million** for detailed investigation of potential international air freight hub sites that will transport regional NSW produce from paddock to plane to plate, once the current pre-feasibility study is complete.

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