

MEDIA RELEASE

Phil Costa
Minister for Water
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NSW GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES \$4.45 MILLION DROUGHT ASSISTANCE PACKAGE FOR THE LACHLAN VALLEY

NSW Water Minister, Phil Costa today announced a \$4.45 million drought assistance package to assist towns and water users in the Lachlan Valley during the extreme drought conditions.

“The measures include a direct contribution from the Rees Government of up to \$2.35 million toward emergency town supply drought works and water carting subsidies,” said Mr Costa.

“Drought conditions in the Lachlan Valley has reached crisis point.

“In recognition of just how serious the situation in the Lachlan is, the Government will deliver a package of relief measures to help local communities and water users.

“To assist our struggling farmers and rural communities, the 50 per cent transport subsidy for domestic water transport is to be extended to the 50 small landowners in the affected area who are currently ineligible for the subsidy.

“I am also pleased to announce the deferral of general security fixed water charges for the Lachlan Valley for the first half of 2009-10. This will be revisited in early 2010 in light of dam storage levels and what rain has fallen in the coming six months.

“Lachlan general security water users have received zero allocation for five years out of the past six. This is unprecedented anywhere else in NSW,” he said.

Mr Costa said for the past six months the Government had initiated a series of works to enhance the security of town water supplies downstream of Wyangala Dam that will be affected by the flow restrictions.

“Such works include provision for emergency bores at Forbes, Condobolin, Lake Cargelligo, Ivanhoe, Euabalong, Booligal and Oxley, as well as a improving the water quality at Cowra.

“These emergency measures will ensure that essential human needs in towns are met during this period.

“Despite severely reduced water use, Wyangala Dam has dropped to 5.5 per cent of capacity, the lowest level in history for this time of year.

“Exceptional measures are required to conserve the available water, including limiting flows downstream of Condobolin.

“Since the end of October, pulse flows are being provided downstream of Condobolin to provide town water to Lake Cargelligo.

“This is a continuation of the NSW Government’s \$500 million commitment to support drought-affected country NSW,” he added.

The NSW Government is constantly assessing all of its drought support programs to assist rural and regional communities and working closely with the affected communities to provide help where it is most needed.

The Lachlan Assistance Package includes:

Government assistance totalling \$2.1 million for emergency bores across the catchment including Forbes, Condobolin, Lake Cargelligo, Ivanhoe, Euabalong, Euabalong West, Booligal and Oxley. Cowra’s water supply will receive powdered activated carbon treatment.

\$250,000 to extend the 50 per cent transport subsidy for domestic water transport to all rural landowners along the Lachlan below Condobolin

Deferral of general security fixed water charges for six months. This will be revisited in the new year in light of dam storage levels and rainfall.