NSW DROUGHT PACKAGE

The NSW Government's drought package includes:

- An additional $250 million in the Farm Innovation Fund, which:
    - provides farmers with low-interest loans of up to $250,000 to improve farm infrastructure and help farmers prepare for and deal with drought;
    - introduces new loans of up to $50,000 that will be interest-free for seven years, to allow producers to bring in fodder and grain, to move livestock, or install key water infrastructure including troughs, underground pipes or water-saving technology;
- New criteria in the Farm Innovation Fund which allows farmers to use the loans to "bio-bank" the genetics of their herd that would otherwise be lost during de-stocking;
- Additional staff within the Department of Primary Industries to process and streamline Farm Innovation Fund applications;
- More than $4 million in mental health support for communities facing natural disaster and drought including:
    - Support for the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health, including continued funding for 13 statewide co-ordinators to link rural people to the help they need; and
    - Additional counselling support through funding for the National Association for Loss and Grief, a Dubbo-based NGO.
- New funding of $25 million to build and operate three new Doppler radar weather stations in the Central West and Far West to improve weather forecasting and help farmers make better business decisions;
- A new kangaroo management plan to reduce kangaroo numbers in drought-hit areas, including:
    - Removing the need for landholders to physically tag culled kangaroos;
    - Removing the 'shoot and let lie' conditions to reduce bio-security risk;
    - Expanding the commercial harvest zone for kangaroos in the South East of NSW; and
    - Connecting landholders experiencing high kangaroo numbers with commercial harvesters through Local Land Services and other agencies.
- Up to $5 million towards helping local councils repair dirt roads damaged by the temporary access for heavy vehicles carrying feed, water and livestock.