

Drought Relief Measures

EVALUATION JULY 2021



Overview of the drought relief measures

The NSW Government delivered

12 drought relief measures

to address the compounding impacts of the drought from July 2018 to June 2021.



\$453m ✓

10 Measures

Aimed to provide immediate drought relief to primary producers and included transport subsidies, fee relief and non-financial assistance.

\$223m ✓

2 Measures

Aimed to build long term drought preparedness and included loans for farm infrastructure and other drought assistance.

Recommendations



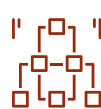
Prioritise measures to support primary producers' long-term preparation and resilience

- Support primary producers to become resilient when they have the capacity to prepare
- Deliver capacity-building programs
- Strengthen the technical assessment of on-farm infrastructure projects



Plan the government's response to 'in-drought' relief

- Put in place 'in-drought' planning process
- Utilise measures found to be effective in providing short-term relief
- Clarify eligibility criteria for each measure



Establish mechanisms for ongoing review, adaptation and improvement of in-drought relief.

- Develop a M&E framework for drought measures
- Undertake regular evidence-based reviews of measures during drought
- Access local knowledge



Balance local and state-wide delivery.

- Retain centralised processing
- Adhere to 'No lines on maps'
- Deliver coordinated and consistent communications via local support networks
- Use a range of information and communications channels
- Resource according to demand



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Evaluation findings

OUTCOMES

The measures **provided immediate drought relief** to primary producers and supported the welfare of livestock to be maintained.

The measures **contributed to primary producers being able to recover** from the drought, by maintaining cash flow and supporting the retention of stock.

Primary producers appear to have **limited capacity during the drought to take advantage of measures to improve the long-term resilience** of their businesses.

BENEFICIARIES

The measures were **accessed in all regions** regardless of the severity of the drought impact.

The measures **benefitted livestock industries** more than other primary industries.

The measures **benefitted primary producers** directly, and through them, local business and communities were likely to benefit.

REGIONAL DELIVERY

Measures were delivered by the NSW Department of Primary Industries and other NSW government agencies and organisations.

Delivery was effectively coordinated at the state level but coordination and communication

at the local level was often insufficient.

Regional staff (Local Land Services, Rural Financial Counselling Service) provided substantial unfunded support to primary producers to access measures.

Online delivery processes were not appropriate for all primary producers.

VALUE FOR MONEY

The investment in immediate drought relief through the **transport subsidies returned a benefit cost ratio of 0.15** (BCR 0.15)

The investment in drought preparedness through the **infrastructure loans was worthwhile** (BCR 1.44)

Administration costs were kept to a minimum or absorbed by delivery agencies.

ADMINISTRATION

Measures that did not require primary producers to apply, including fee relief, were administered efficiently.

Measures requiring primary producers to apply took some time to upscale administration resources and presented some challenges for primary producers to use.

Evaluation approach

The evaluation assessed the effectiveness of the NSW Drought Relief measures and was informed by;



A review of agency documents and datasets



An online survey completed by

345 Primary Producers in NSW



Interviews with

31 primary producers and
43 state and regional staff

