

# Drought Briefing

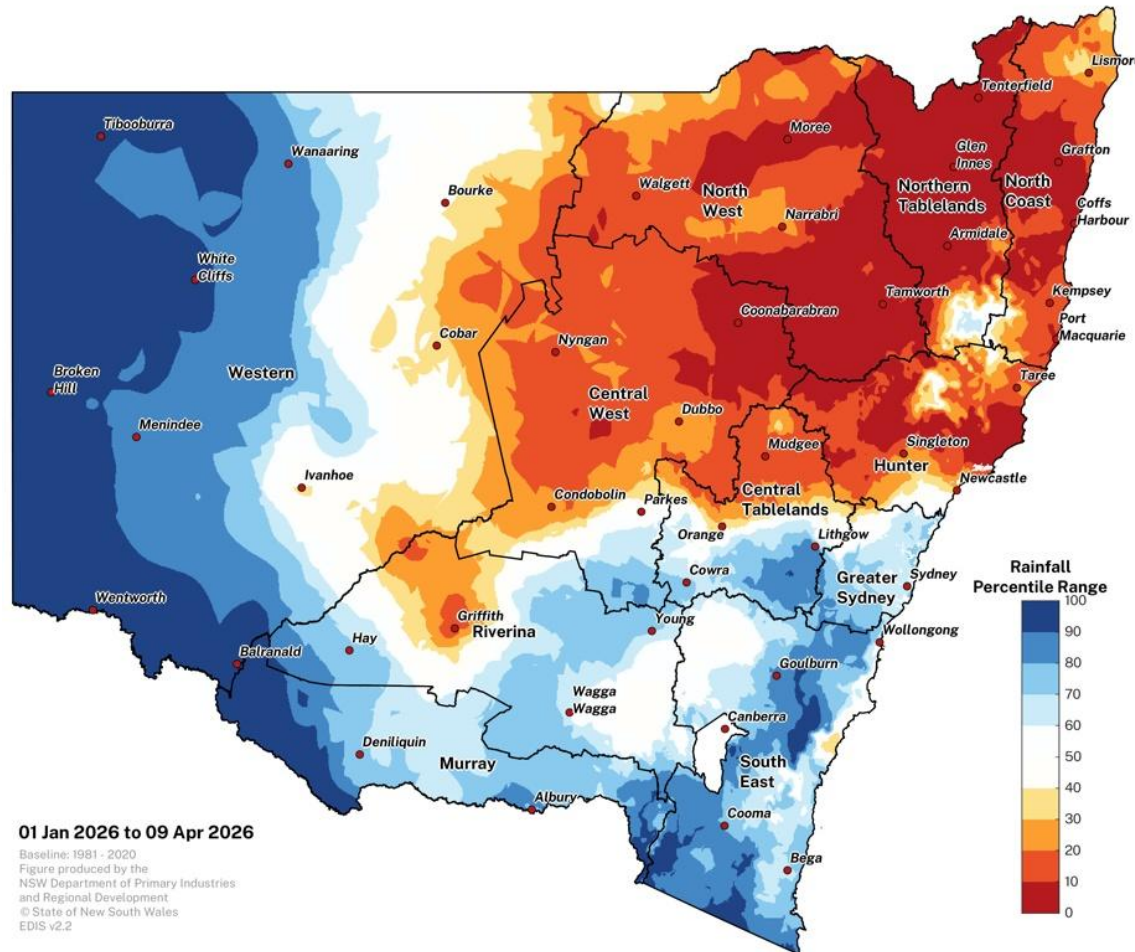
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North West NSW, May 2026

NSW Drought Co-ordinator



# Shorter term droughts (3-6 Months)

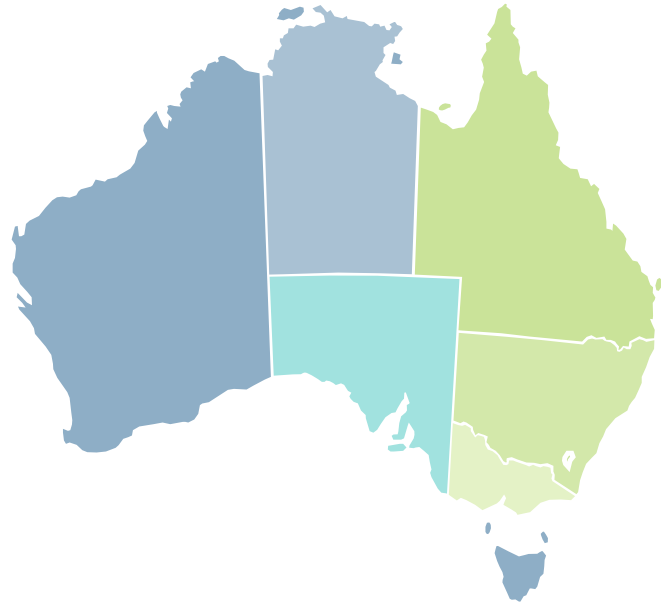


Year to date rainfall percentiles

- Has been a rapid onset, different to Southern NSW
- Autumn rainfall could also quickly reverse the situation
- Local reports of producers initiating drought management (e.g selling livestock)
- Strong in the far west and south coast
- Further follow up rainfall required in the south

Why don't we declare droughts ?

# National Drought Agreement



The National Drought Agreement (NDA) is an intergovernmental agreement between the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments.



Communication



Collaboration



Coordination

# National Drought Agreement - Drought response differs from disaster response



Droughts	Natural hazards
Slower onset	Fast-onset
Easier to predict	Hard to predict with certainty
Generally, more gradual impact	Large-scale and immediate damage threat

## Drought Policy Approach

- Treats drought as a predictable, slow-onset risk, not a natural disaster.
- Focuses on preparedness and building long-term resilience
- Does not use drought declarations to automatically trigger support
- Recognises impacts vary by region and farm business

# National Drought Agreement

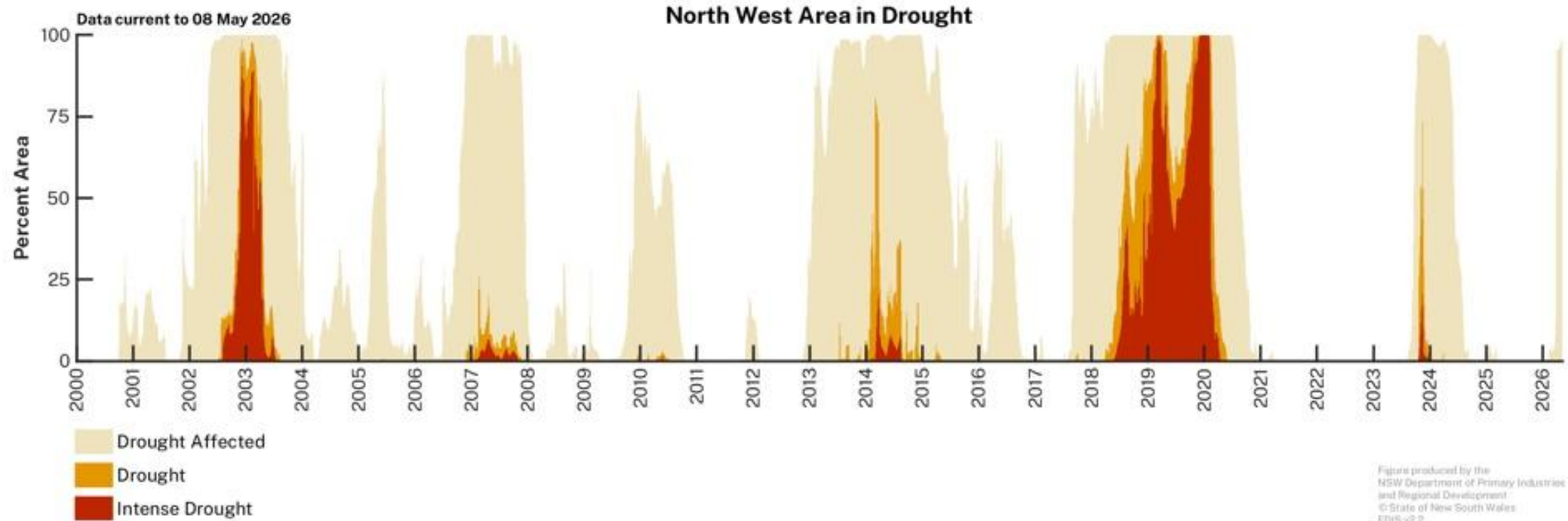
## Key Principles

- drought policies and programs should be evidenced based, and deliver a public benefit.
- that drought is one of a number of business risks that farmers and other businesses should actively prepare for and adapt to.
- that there can be times when even the most prepared and sustainable may need support.
- eligibility should be based on need, not activated by drought declarations.
- that drought impacts beyond the farm gate and into the broader rural community.



# Historic Drought Management

Historical data shows previous Regional drought conditions since year 2000.



North West LLS Region 2000-2026

# Role of the *NSW Drought Coordinator*



- ✓ Engage with producers, service providers and communities
- ✓ Provide insights from impacted regions to NSW Government
- ✓ Link Local Government, community and Government
- ✓ Inform policy and program settings
- ✓ Connect communities to appropriate support

# Pipeline to Government



Drought co-ordinator meetings with stakeholders across NSW seeking feedback  
(currently 115 meetings since Nov)



Total engagement with 1022+ farmers, producers and stakeholders

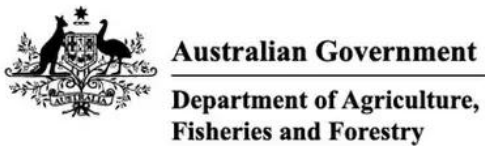


Interactions with Local Government  
Premiers Rural, Regional and Remote Advisory Committee (Drought subcommittee)



Regular reporting to Minister  
For consideration

# Stakeholders



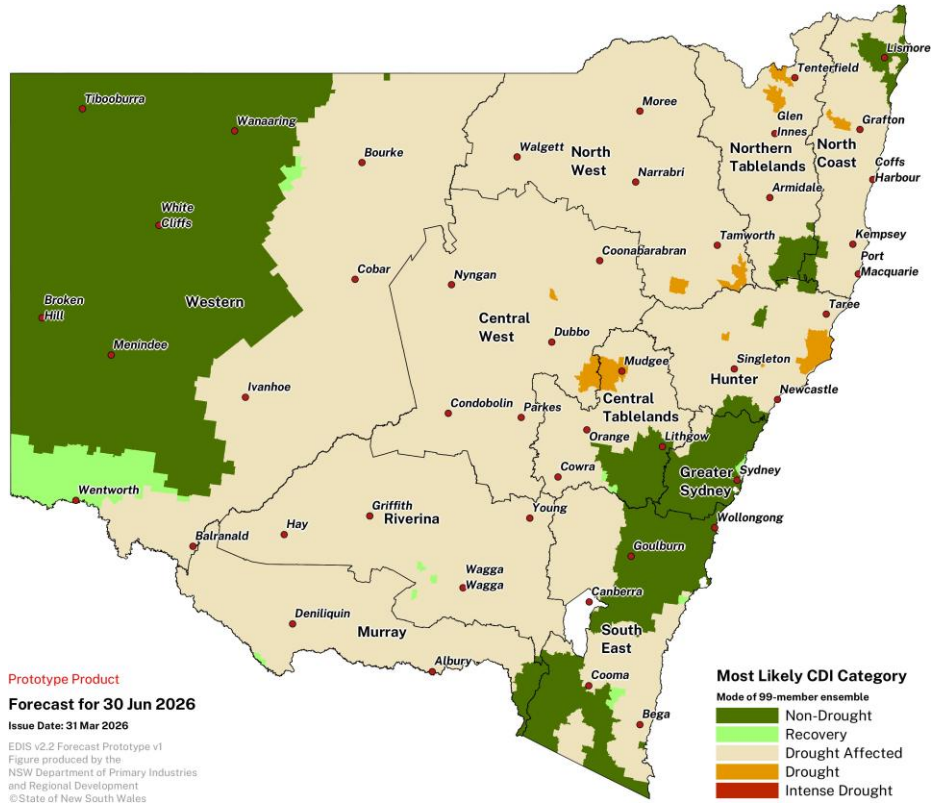
# Critical Issues



Photo : "Banoon" Wentworth, Willandra Lakes landholder group

- Fuel and fertiliser costs and shortages adding to uncertainty and stress in the sector
- Reassessing decisions re broadacre cropping reduced areas, or utilising legumes (vetch or clover) or drought tolerant options (Barley) over high input options (canola) and trade livestock
- Rotations in pasture likely to remain in pasture and not proceed to crop
- Stock prices remaining high is a positive

# Critical Issues



- Critical post autumn decisions for livestock producers
- Existing debt levels is a factor for consideration of new loans
- Ensure plans in place for stock/cropping/pasture decisions
- Seek advice to assist with decision making

# Wellbeing & Financial support

- General fatigue and stress is significant – look after yourself
- Talk to your RFCS and/or Bank early
- Rural Adversity Mental Health Program
- Local Health Districts – Farm Gate Counselling services
- Rural Aid – Fodder / Drinking Water
- Mental Health Line 1800 011 511

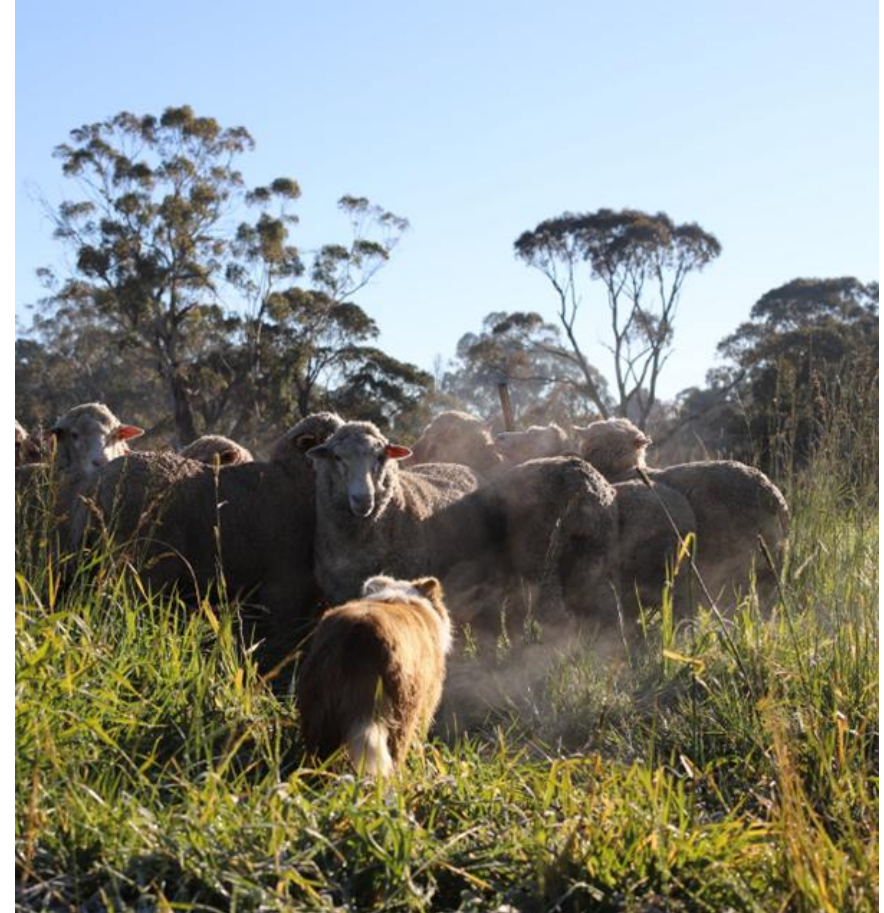


Photo : Jingellic Producers day, Upper Murray

# How producers can engage and raise issues ?

## Key Principles

- Subscribe to the Seasonal conditions reporting
- Attend local forums and producer days
- Stay informed (radio, news, Govt social media posts)
- Speak to your local LLS Office inc LLS Agricultural advisory staff
- Connect with local groups such as NSW Farmers groups
- Keep in touch with your neighbours
- Utilise professional services RFCS, Ramhp
- By email to Drought Co-ordinator at [drought@lls.nsw.gov.au](mailto:drought@lls.nsw.gov.au)



# How can Local Government help ?

## Key Principles

- Sharing information
- Drought Factsheet
- Stay up to date with Seasonal Conditions
- Advise of any local events where we can attend
- Refer enquiries to Drought Co-ordinator
- By email to Drought Co-ordinator at [drought@lls.nsw.gov.au](mailto:drought@lls.nsw.gov.au)



Photo : Coolamon Shire GM Tony Donoghue and Drought Co-ordinator

# NSW Drought Support Measures

*The NSW Government has a coordinated action plan that provides financial, business, wellbeing and on-ground support, along with digital farming tools to support farmers manage drought conditions.*



## Financial Support

- Drought Ready & Resilient Fund loans **increased** up to \$500K\*
- **NEW** Drought Relief Loan up to \$100K\*



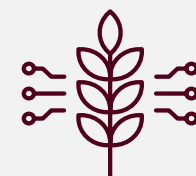
## Business Support

- Farm Business Resilience Program (\$43.2M)
- Rural Financial Counselling Service (**continued** funding\*)



## Local Land Services on-ground support

- NSW Drought Coordinator term **extended**\*
- Drought Adoption Officers (**extended**\*)
- Veterinary advice
- Total Grazing Pressure – Kangaroo mgt program (\$1.2M)
- **Free** feed & water testing\* (\$250k)



## Digital Farming Tools

- Awareness Events
- myStockPlanner
- Drought and Supplementary Feed Calculator
- Managing Drought, Fire and Flood guide



## Wellbeing Support

- Rural Adversity Mental Health Program
- NSW Mental Health Line
- Lifeline

\* New measures announced Feb 2026



- **Doubling the loan amount available from \$250,000 up to \$500,000** under the \$250 million Drought Ready and Resilient Fund –enables farmers to undertake larger, sustainability-focused drought resilience projects while also covering operational costs such as feed and transport.
- **New small Drought Relief Loan of up to \$100,000 over 5 years** – this new product will provide farmers with immediate, low-cost finance to help manage the impacts of drought. With an upfront payment option,

reduced documentation requirements, and no property as security on the loan requirement – farmers can get funds faster, easier and cheaper.

- **NSW Rural Financial Counselling Service \$1.8M funding** - co-funded program with the Australian Government provides free and independent financial counselling to eligible farmers experiencing, or at risk of, financial hardship.



- **Free feed and water testing available statewide, \$250,000 funding** - Local Land Services will make available statewide test kits to help farmers assess feed and water quality to plan feed budgets and manage their livestock's health.
- **Reduce kangaroo populations in drought affected western NSW, \$1.2 million funding** - to help combat the emerging kangaroo grazing pressure competing for feed and water. Program is currently being consulted on through the Western LLS Kangaroo management taskforce.
- **Increase the targeting of feral pigs, rabbits and deer for landholder, \$2 million program** - supporting landholders in drought-impacted regions where limited food and water drives the feral and pest animals to compete with livestock around critical water points and shaded areas.

# Feedback from your community ?



Photo : Wentworth Roundtable Meeting

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- What are the local impacts?
  - Key constraints and decisions ?
  - How are you coping ?
  - Any feedback for Govt ?

How to contact the NSW  
Drought Coordinator :

[drought@lls.nsw.gov.au](mailto:drought@lls.nsw.gov.au)

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