

Tuesday, 17 November 2020

MORE THAN \$700 MILLION FOR SUSTAINABLE, SECURE AND HEALTHY WATER RESOURCES

The NSW Government's 2020-21 Budget locks in more than \$700 million in 2020-21 to support sustainable, secure and healthy water resources across the State, including about \$290 million over four years for vital water infrastructure projects in regional NSW.

Minister for Water, Housing and Property Melinda Pavey said preparing now for future droughts must be a priority, along with the equitable management of water resources for industry, business, communities and the environment.

"While much of NSW is now emerging from the worst drought on record, we can be sure there will be droughts again in the future," Mrs Pavey said.

"What is important is that we are better prepared for those future droughts, and our investment in water security now and for the future, demonstrates the NSW Liberals Nationals Government is up to the challenge.

"We're following through on commitments we made during the drought to deliver critical water supply infrastructure.

"More than \$61 million, over two years, in regional water stimulus projects will benefit regional communities recovering from the COVID recession and build drought resilience across NSW for years to come."

Funding committed to regional water for 2020-21 includes:

- **More than \$188 million** for water rebates to low income households to assist with cost of living
- **\$122 million** to continue commitments for drought relief including:
 - More than \$58 million for critical drought infrastructure
 - \$38 million for accelerated ground water assessments and rebates for licence holders
 - More than \$18 million for emergency water carting and infrastructure to ensure critical regional town water supply
 - More than \$7.1 million for business and household water saving and resourcing
- **Almost \$45 million** for the regional water stimulus program delivering urgent water infrastructure to improve water supply management, water security and supplementary supply via stormwater harvesting
- **More than \$35 million** under the Safe and Secure Water Program for critical local water infrastructure to maintain town water supply
- **More than \$30 million** to deliver investigation and enforcement of suspicious activities and alleged breaches to water regulation in NSW and manage dam safety.

Mrs Pavey said further funding would also support the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) to continue its monitoring work.

“One of the key planks for the government’s 2017 Water Reform Action Plan was the establishment of an independent regulator for water resources in NSW. Resulting in the establishment of NRAR in April 2018,” Mrs Pavey said.

“NRAR has made significant progress with more than \$30 million this financial year contributing towards the continued monitoring and enforcement of water rules, and the investigation of suspicious activities.

“For Water, this is a budget that supports all water users, communities and the environment.”

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