

LITHGOW CITY COUNCIL

DROUGHT COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME

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As presented by

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Input by

**Hampton, Rydal, Capertee,
Lidsdale, Portland and
Wallerawang
Communities**

As you know, the situation has re-intensified across NSW. Overall the CDI is unchanged since the February State Seasonal Update (SSU) with 99.5% of NSW experiencing drought conditions. Drought is a natural disaster and has a catastrophic impact to farmers, on regional employment and small and local businesses.

The Hartley Branch is tremendously proud of the impacts for drought support in the Lithgow LGA.

We welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with Lithgow City Council to share resources and expertise to ensure projects enjoy long term sustainability.

Specifically, related to the project aims of the Drought Communities Programme – Extension Guidelines is creating resources which will continue beyond the grant period which is equitable and cost effective.

Specific needs and interests of the community link across the following key pillars:

- Good Land, Water & Environmental management practices (priority pests and weeds).
- Stewardship of important natural resources.
- Reinforcing the supply chain through improved road and transport access.
- Communication - there is generally low knowledge and therefore take-up of the significant support available to prepare for and respond to drought,
- Unlocking Data - NSW Farmers supports better access, understanding and leveraging of technology and data to aid preparedness and resilience.
- Financial Planning, Counselling and Income Support.
- Families, Individuals and Community Mental Health.

Drought Communities Programme – Extension Guidelines

Section 5 of the Federal Government's Drought Communities Guidelines outlines eligible projects and activities which can be funded through the program.

The objectives of the program are to deliver support to targeted drought-affected regions of Australia by funding:

- local community infrastructure and
- other drought relief projects.

Funding will target infrastructure and other projects that:

- provide employment for people whose work opportunities have been impacted by drought
- stimulate local community spending
- use local resources, businesses and suppliers
- provide a long-lasting benefit to communities and the agricultural industries on which they depend.

The intended outcomes of the program are to:

- increase employment in regions by providing work for locals and/or farmers and farm labourers/staff/contractors whose employment opportunities have been affected by drought
- improve levels of economic activity in regions
- increase productivity in regions
- enable better retention of businesses, services and facilities.

WE ARE A COMMUNITY

Suggestions for the Drought Communities Programme – Extension allocation in the Lithgow LGA include:

1. COOPREATIVE PROGRAMS

- Fencing projects in conjunction with partial funding under the Pest Animal and Weed Management Program working with Upper Macquarie County Council and Local Land Services.
- Eligible road projects in conjunction with partial funding under the Roads to Recovery Program. (See page 7 of Drought Communities Programme - grant opportunity guidelines March 2019).

2. IMPROVE DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS

- Items to construct a new or upgrade an existing Stock Containment Areas.
- Reticulated water systems using pumps, tanks and troughs for livestock.
- Irrigation system upgrades.
- Grain and fodder storage.
- Farm monitoring technology.
- Feeding system upgrades.

3. SMALL VILLAGES AND TOWNS

- Increased water tank rebates.
- Investigation into carting treated potable water from Lithgow/Wang/Portland and options going forward.
- Water bores fully equipped with a submersible pump and controls.
- Pipelines to carry water from bores to large capacity storage tanks.

4. LITHGOW, WALLERAWANG AND PORTLAND

- Ensuring that current water infrastructure is able to maintained, and replacement of old or failing systems using labourers/staff/contractors from the region and local supply chain and consumption efforts.

5. CAPERTEE

- There is no town water and the ground water under Capertee has high deposits of Iron & Calcium.
- Suggested investigation into treatment of water, water storage or pipelines with consideration to water from the mines.
- Address water shortages / accessibility for firefighting and and water filling stations at Fire Brigade sheds.

6. EVENTS, COMMUNAL PLACES AND TOURISM

- Lithgow Council Lunch/Dinner event with NSW Farmers, the agricultural community and regional supply chains affected by drought.
- Repair facilities and new signage for the community and tourists using camping and caravanning facilities.
- Community Hall and Facility Upgrades including accessibility ramps, car parks, toilets and handrails.
- Allocation for the establishment of an education and community wellbeing hub.

WHAT'S BEING DONE AROUND THE GROUNDS?

For background, the following projects were funded in Oberon and Blayney Shire:

OBERON:

Oberon Council plans started with the identification of community needs through community outreach and how the Council could satisfy these needs while generating an acceptable level of return.

- 23 November 2018 - Drought Relief Events – O'Connell \$27,500
- 23 November 2018 - Primitive Camping Facilities – Reef Reserve \$47,960
- 12 December 2018 - Burruga Dam Picnic Facilities Toilet and track upgrade \$181,940
- 12 December 2018 - Black Springs Hall Kitchen Upgrade \$44,000
- 16 Jan 2019 Water Bores Black Springs and O'Connell \$161,150
- Showground Amenities Block and Electricity Meter \$147,000
- Oberon Town Fitness Centre Fit-out \$187,000
- RV Dump point and Tourist Boards \$74,000

Oberon Council funding will be expended by 30 June 2019.

"keeping local people in jobs, supporting local businesses also doing it tough from the downturn in trade and driving wealth back into our communities"



BLAYNEY:

11 projects worth a total \$3.43m in value will be invested into goods, services, materials and contracts in the local district. Blayney has a number of agricultural/farm supply, irrigation businesses where all; fencing materials, water pipe/fixtures and fittings, stock water troughs, pumps tanks, hoses, taps and fittings will be sourced.

Earth-moving contractors will be engaged to undertake the earth-moving and roadworks projects, tree removal businesses based in Lyndhurst and Orange will be contracted for tree clearing and chipping.

A licenced water drilling business from Blayney will be contracted for drilling of the new bore, with local plumbers and electricians installing tank infrastructure and commissioning of those water storage/drought proofing projects.

Local builders, plumbers, electricians, painters and carpenters will be employed for the hall, golf club, museum, seating installation, utilities/services connections and building refurbishments.

Steel fencing from a local engineering business will be sourced for a showground fencing project and the picket fence will be manufactured from a regional business in Tamworth. Local fencing contractors, will remove and build all new fences.

The 11 projects combined will provide jobs for 18 different local tradespersons, 13 rural/farm supply businesses and 10 contractors each with plant and equipment, apprentices and employees.

The NSW Farmers Hartley Branch welcomes the opportunity to discuss the efforts to prioritise and design responses that will be delivered locally – by business and trades – so that capacity building is broader than the resultant product in delivering the best results that align with broader outcomes.

- Rachel Nicoll

