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OILSEEDS NEWS

CUTS TO IRRIGATION ALLOCATIONS IN MURRAY AND MURRUMBIDGEE SPARKS EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Lemma Government is co-ordinating an emergency response to immediately help farmers in the Murray and Murrumbidgee regions, Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald said today.

Minister Macdonald said a regional team is being put in place following the Government's move to secure water supplies for communities in the Murray and Murrumbidgee Valleys following cuts to

“The Government took action today to secure water supplies in these areas during the worst drought in 100 years,” Minister Macdonald said.

“Some tough decisions have had to be made but as the drought continues our priority must be the securing of town water supplies – that is why we have been forced to make a cut in water availability for water users in both the Murray and Murrumbidgee Valleys.

“I have instructed the DPI to immediately pull together 24 extra staff with local expertise in irrigation, agronomy, livestock and horticulture to help farmers through the crisis.

“From early next week the team members can be accessed through DPI offices in Deniliquin, Yanco and Hay – and will be sent out to areas of need.”

Minister Macdonald said the teams would be working closely with local industry groups and with Catchment Management Authorities.

“We want to make sure help goes where it is needed – we are all in this together,” Minister Macdonald said.

“The emergency teams will be addressing issues including irrigation and on-farm management options, strategies for the survival of perennial plantings, best options for existing rice crops and other broad acre crops and pastures. They will also look at farm business decision tools and advice on alternatives available for dairy farmers, the livestock management of sheep and cattle and vegetable cropping options.

“DPI senior industry specialists will also be meeting with local industry representatives and irrigation companies while leading DPI scientists will also be used if needed for advice.”

“I would urge farmers located in these areas to contact the DPI officers in their local areas for support,” he said.

Minister Macdonald said a series of DPI workshops would also be held across the region in coming weeks.

Key Regional Contact Numbers:

- Deniliquin - 03 5881 9999
- Dareton - 03 5019 8400

- Hay - 02 6993 1608
- Griffith - 02 6960 1300
- Yanco - 02 6951 2611
- Wagga - 02 6931 2600
- Finley - 03 5883 1644
- Additional support will be handled through the Drought Hotline 1800 814 647

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