MEDIA RELEASE

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DROUGHT-AFFECTED KEMPSEY GAINS A MILLION

Kempsey farmers and residents will benefit from $1 million being allocated to a range of projects across the shire through the Australian Government’s Drought Communities Program.

Infrastructure projects on the cards include improvements to Kempsey regional saleyards, upgrading the Macleay River flood gauges network and standardising the numbering system for rural properties.

Federal Member for Cowper Pat Conaghan said this Drought Communities Program funding would make a difference in the lives of rural people and strengthen the area’s resilience to future floods and droughts.

“I’m really excited about the swag of important projects Kempsey Shire Council will deliver through this funding,” he said.

“In addition to improving our cattle saleyards, water filling stations across the region will be upgraded and some great actions will be undertaken to improve the Macleay River catchment and treat Tropical Soda Apple.

“I thank Minister David Littleproud for providing this funding for our community and I encourage drought-affected farmers, farm workers and suppliers to apply for our Government’s one-off $3,000 grants still open until about Christmas.”

Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management David Littleproud said the program’s work would support jobs for people in the Kempsey region and local contractors.

“Make no mistake, the Federal Nationals Government has backed drought-hit communities by committing more than $10 billion in drought support,” he said.

“The Drought Communities Program is so important because it helps keep people working, helps cash-flow for businesses and provides work for contractors.

“For the Kempsey region, this $1 million announced earlier this year and now provided to council follows $666,000 being awarded in grants of up to $3,000 to farmers from the Drought Communities Support Initiative.

“The Government is aware of the added challenges presented to regional communities now due to COVID-19.
“Communities should rest assured the Government continues to have their back, with an economic and health support package of $507 billion in assistance announced to date.

“This includes the $2.8 billion package to assist local government in the delivery of priority projects with a focus on roads and community infrastructure upgrades and maintenance.”

Kempsey Shire Mayor Liz Campbell said some of the projects Council would deliver through this $1 million funding include:

- Upgrading Kempsey Regional Saleyards
- Improving the Macleay River flood gauges network
- Upgrading water filling stations across the region
- Restocking the Macleay River with native fish to boost stock numbers
- Controlling Tropical Soda Apple weed infestations on Crown-owned riparian land in the Upper Macleay
- Supporting events including the inaugural Bellbrook Buster, an Upper Macleay event, and the Kempsey Show.

“This funding represents a vital shot in the arm for the Kempsey community who were hit very hard by the Black Summer fires,” Mayor Campbell said.

“We have engaged at length with the community on the allocation of this funding and these important projects, ranging from key infrastructure to community-driven projects, are focused on just on rebuilding but also building resilience and the future of these areas.

“We thank the government for their assistance in helping us help the community.”

The Morrison-McCormack Government’s Drought Communities Support Initiative – Round 2, which St Vincent De Paul administers in the Kempsey region, is still open to applicants until the end of this year. Farmers, farm workers and farm suppliers in the Kempsey Local Government Area are encouraged to apply online at https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Find_Help/drought_assistance/

Or St Vincent De Paul can be contacted by telephone on 1300 846 643 and staff are available to assist with applications.

To date, 232 farmers have been awarded grants of up to $3,000, along with 39 farm workers and 29 farm contractors/suppliers, providing total assistance of $666,000.

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