



Niall Blair
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Regional Water
Minister for Trade and Industry

MEDIA RELEASE

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ORANGE DECLARED AG NATURAL DISASTER

Following intense storms that hit parts of the Central West this month, the NSW Government has declared an agricultural natural disaster for Orange and parts of the Cabonne Local Government Area (LGA).

Minister for Primary Industries, Niall Blair said the declaration means affected growers can access low interest loans of up to \$130,000 to repair any damage to their orchards.

“We currently estimate the damage bill to be more than \$4 million, however we expect this could rise as producers continue to assess just how widespread the impact of the storms has been,” Mr Blair said.

“We know our fruit producers are heading into one of the busiest times of year, so to take this hit now after months of drought as well, is extremely tough.

“The damage has included pitting, bruising and skin punctures to both cherries, apples and wine grapes, as well as rips and collapses in structures like hail netting.”

The low interest loans will assist in replacing and repairing on-farm infrastructure, such as tree netting, fencing and equipment.

Mr Blair said while these loans will help with repairs to structures and equipment, it's the public who ultimately can help growers the most.

“As we head into the Christmas and New Year period the best thing we can all do is check where our fruit is from and make sure we are buying from our Central West producers.

“Every punnet you buy goes a long way in helping our producers to recover quickly and continue to provide some of the country's best fruit.”

Details on available assistance is available from the NSW Rural Assistance Authority website at www.raa.nsw.gov.au, or by calling 1800 678 593.

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