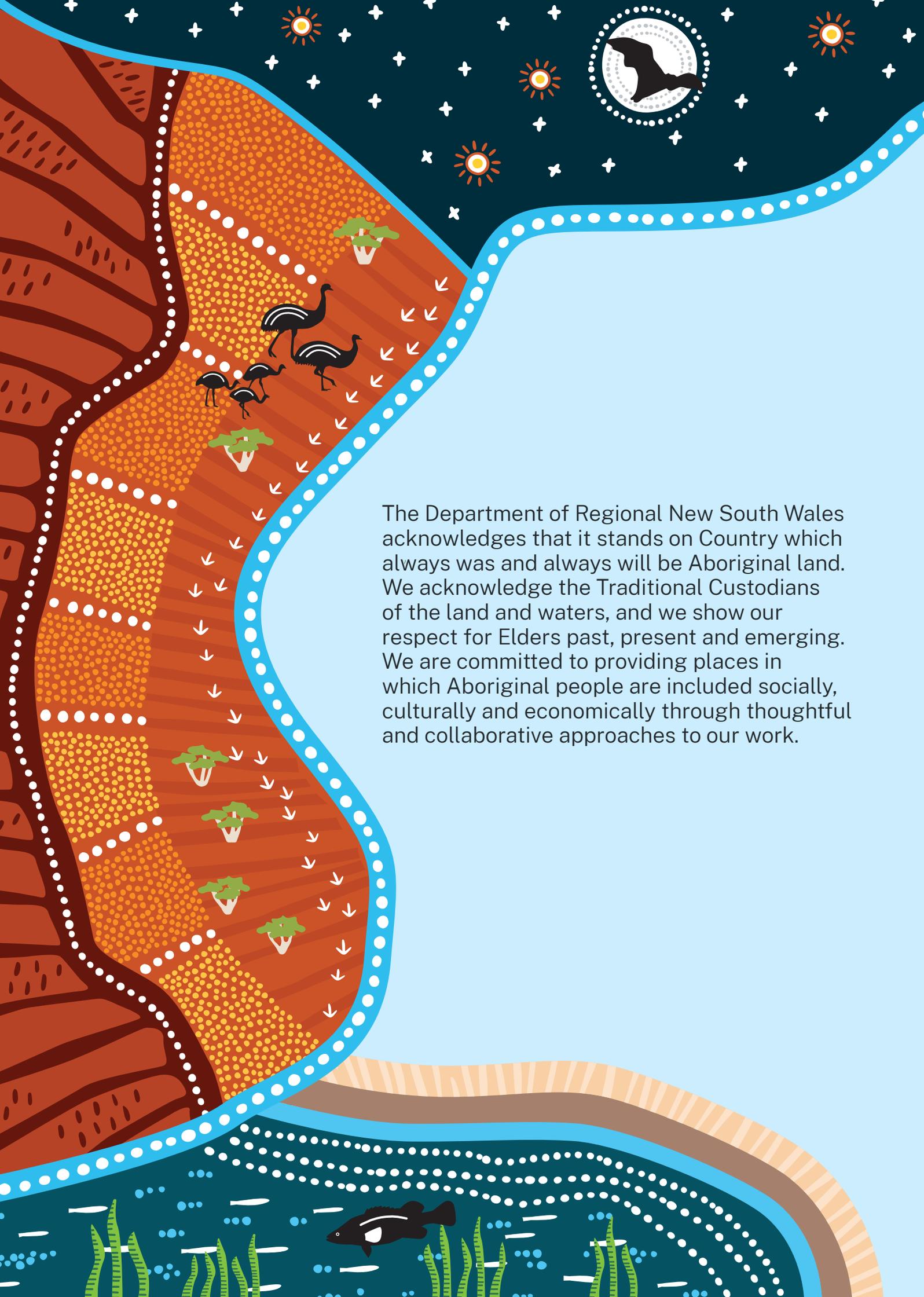

Primary Industry Support Package

Critical Producer Grant

Program Framework





The Department of Regional New South Wales acknowledges that it stands on Country which always was and always will be Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters, and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging. We are committed to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work.

Message from the Deputy Premier



New South Wales' agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture and forestry industries play a vital role in our state's strong and thriving economy, with primary producers contributing almost \$12 billion into the NSW economy each year and employing about 164,000 people.

The flood events of February and March this year have hit producers hard in regional areas.

Farmers lost crops and livestock, had pastures and infrastructure inundated and were cut off from their communities. While our farmers are recovering, we recognise the hardest hit need additional support.

The Critical Producer Grants, co-funded by the Australian and NSW governments, will provide \$100 million to primary producers hardest hit by the floods to help them restore production systems and rebuild damaged essential infrastructure.

Our farmers are renowned for their resilience but after suffering major setbacks from natural disasters the NSW Government is committed to ensuring they get back on their feet.

These grants will help provide direct and much-needed assistance so our primary producers can get on with producing the vital products that Australia and the rest of the world relies on.

This package is part of more than \$3.5 billion that both governments have committed to helping communities and industries recover.

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring regional NSW remains strong.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Toole". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Hon. Paul Toole MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Regional New South Wales
Minister for Police

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Background



The agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture and forestry industries were significantly impacted by the February and March 2022 NSW Severe Weather and Flooding (AGRN 1012) events. Many businesses and farms have faced large clean-up efforts as a result of the storm and flood event and have lost on-farm infrastructure, animals, stores and crops.

Many of the affected regions and primary producers have also been slowly recovering from the impacts of drought, bushfires, COVID-19 and multiple storms and floods in recent years. This has further impacted the ability of these industries and businesses to 'bounce-back' from yet another natural disaster.

Primary industries are a significant economic driver, particularly in regional NSW. In 2019-2020, agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture and forestry had combined economic production of more than \$11.9 billion. These industries also supported more than 78,000 direct jobs and more than 68,000 indirect and manufacturing jobs in NSW in 2020-2021*.

The NSW and Australian governments are committed to providing ongoing support for communities impacted by the February and March 2022 NSW Severe Weather and Flooding events, with more than \$3.5 billion committed to support community, economic, industry and environmental recovery.

The \$100 million Critical Producer Grant is one of four recovery programs under the \$150 million Primary Industry Support Package (PISP) which was announced in March 2022. All projects supported under the Critical Producer Grant will be jointly funded by the NSW and Australian governments.

The Critical Producer Grant is critical to key primary production industries in storm and flood-impacted areas, helping them to remain viable and effectively recover to support the local and state economy.

The Department of Regional NSW (the Department) conducted extensive analysis to better understand and document the direct damage experienced as a result of the February and March 2022 NSW Severe Weather and Flooding events. This is supported by direct engagement through state and regional recovery subcommittees, industry working groups and direct consultation with industry representative organisations.

*Source: ABS and NSW Department of Primary Industries

Purpose

The purpose of the Critical Producer Grant Framework (the Framework) is to outline key program objectives, eligibility criteria and timeframes for NSW storm and flood-affected primary producers and primary production enterprises eligible under the \$100 million Primary Industry Support Package, Critical Producer Grant.

This Framework should be read in conjunction with the relevant Industry Guidelines.



Critical Producer Grant

Objective

The objective of the Critical Producer Grant is to provide funding to help primary producers and primary production enterprises impacted by the February and March 2022 NSW Severe Weather and Flooding (AGRN 1012) events, to rebuild and recover in the medium to longer term with the aim of supporting job security, future resilience and enabling future production.

Critical Producer Grant Highlights

Funding for projects to help producers and production enterprises in targeted industries located in disaster declared areas.

Supporting job security, enabling future resilience and enabling future production.

Funding and projects will complement the \$75,000 Special Disaster Grant.

The maximum value of the grant available to producers will vary by industry sector.



Future Resilience

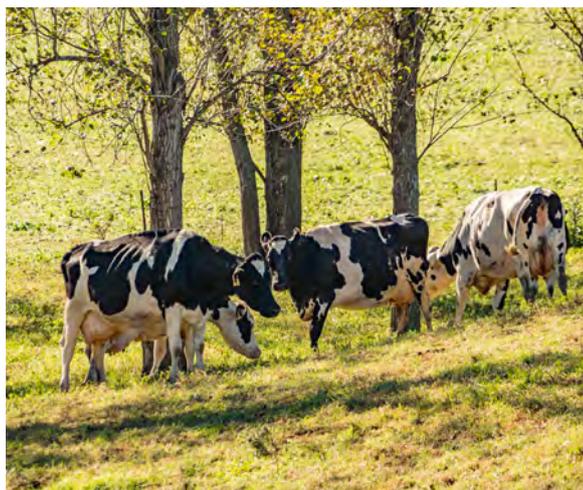
The Critical Producer Grant provides the ability for grant funding to be utilised by primary producers and primary production enterprises to restore and rebuild directly damaged essential infrastructure, including fences and sheds, to a standard that is more resilient and withstands future disasters. This will help to promote rebuilding infrastructure in a way that reduces vulnerability to future disasters, providing continuity in the function of the asset for users, as well as lowering the risk of economic impact and reducing repair costs for asset owners as a result of a natural disaster.

Funding and Eligibility

Up to \$100 million will be available under the Critical Producer Grants to primary producers and primary production enterprises in targeted industries impacted by and operating in Local Government Areas (LGAs) declared under the February and March 2022 NSW Severe Weather and Flooding (AGRN 1012). Grant funding is provided per affected property and per ABN.

Primary producers and primary production enterprises who have been approved for the full value of the \$75,000 Special Disaster Grant in the agriculture, horticulture and aquaculture industry sectors are considered eligible for additional recovery support through the Critical Producer Grant. Forestry support is available for private native forestry leaseholders and timber plantation owners.

There are similarities across the Special Disaster Grant and Critical Producer Grant for applicant eligibility and eligible costs. Both grants are administered by the Rural Assistance Authority (RAA). Refer to the Industry Guidelines on the RAA website for further details on how to apply for the Critical Producer Grant raa.nsw.gov.au/cpg



Targeted Industries

Critical Producer Grant target industries that are identified as heavily impacted are:

- agriculture – dairy, extensive livestock (sheep and cattle), intensive livestock (pork and poultry), apiculture and broadacre cropping
- aquaculture – oysters, mussels and fisheries
- horticulture – turf, vegetables, berries, cut flowers and plant nurseries, perennial tree crops (nut crops, tea tree etc)
- forestry - private native forests and timber plantations

Rates of support per industry and application:

- dairy – up to \$100,000 per applicant
- extensive livestock – up to \$75,000 per applicant
- intensive livestock – up to \$50,000 per applicant
- apiculture – up to \$50,000 per applicant
- broadacre cropping – up to \$75,000 per applicant
- aquaculture – up to \$30,000 per applicant
- fisheries – up to \$30,000 per applicant
- turf – up to \$75,000 per applicant
- vegetables, berries, cut flowers and plant nurseries – up to \$30,000 per applicant
- perennial tree crops – up to \$75,000 per applicant
- private native forests and timber plantations - up to \$10,000 per lease

Support rates per sector and per application have been developed based on impact data and reflect estimated average industry need to further support recovery.

For more information on the Critical Producer Grant targeted industries, refer to the frequently asked questions at raa.nsw.gov.au/cpg

Support is also available to Private Native Forestry (PNF) and timber plantation operators directly impacted by the February and March 2022 NSW Severe Weather and Flooding (AGRN 1012). For all information on the Critical Producer Grant for the forestry industry, including key dates, available funding, and application and assessment processes, refer to the Industry Guidelines at nsw.gov.au/criticalproducergrant. The forestry Critical Producer Grant is administered by the Department and all questions related to the forestry Critical Producer Grant should be directed to the Department.

Consultation

The Critical Producer Grant was developed following extensive industry consultation by the Department in collaboration with NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), Local Land Services (LLS), Resilience NSW, Rural Assistance Authority (RAA) and the National Recovery and Resilience Agency (NRRRA). The design, eligibility and criteria detailed within this Framework has been determined based on the unique, demonstrated recovery needs of impacted industries.



Assessment and Claims Process

The RAA will assess completed applications to confirm applicant and activity eligibility. The Department will assess completed applications for the forestry Critical Producer Grant.

Successful applicants will be notified within 20 working days of receipt of a fully completed application (including all documents required for assessment). Applicants with successful applications will need to execute a funding deed which will set out milestone payments dependent on the sum of their total grant.

Unsuccessful applicants have the ability to appeal in line with RAA guidelines. All applicants have the opportunity to request a review of decisions for assistance if they are dissatisfied. More information is available at raa.nsw.gov.au/loans/appeal-a-decision



Key dates

Applications open:

16 September 2022

Applications close:

30 June 2023

or until program funding is fully allocated, whichever occurs first.

Applicant notification:

Successful applicants will be notified within 20 working days of receipt of a fully completed application (including all documents required for assessment).

Funding deed with the NSW Government:

Following successful application

Project(s) and expenditure completion:

31 May 2024





Probity and Governance

An independent probity advisor will provide guidance on issues concerning integrity, fairness and accountability that may arise throughout the submission, assessment and decision-making process. This will help ensure decisions are made with integrity, fairness and accountability while delivering value for money for NSW.

The Critical Producer Grant will be subject to strict governance with fair and transparent assessment processes. A Probity Plan has been developed to oversee the delivery of the Critical Producer Grant. A Probity Report will be published by the Department at the completion of the program.



Successful Applicants

Successful applicants for the Critical Producer Grant will be notified in writing within 20 working days of receipt of a fully completed application (including all documents required for assessment). Additional information of the application and assessment process is available at raa.nsw.gov.au/cpg

There are significant controls in place for fraud management and successful applicants may be audited to verify the accuracy of the claim and evidence provided.

Applicants should note:

- if successful, the NSW and Australian governments reserve the right to use recipient and project information in media regarding the Critical Producer Grant. Information may be used in the form of media releases, case studies, promotional material and in response to media enquiries relevant to the Critical Producer Grant
- successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the NSW Government
- successful applicants will not be able to access payments from their funding deeds until their approved Special Disaster Grant has been drawn down in its entirety
- grants will be paid via milestone payments set out in the agreement and timing and requirements will vary depending on the grant value
- successful applicants will be required to pay back unspent funds or those funds which are not spent and/or cannot be evidenced as spent in accordance with the funding agreement
- the Department reserves the right to undertake an audit of grant funding within seven years. Funding recipients are required to keep appropriate documentation for audit and assurance purposes
- funding recipients will be required to provide evidence of how projects resulted in measurable benefits consistent with the objectives of the fund, with a focus on employment, recovery and growth.



Monitoring and Evaluation

Successful applicants under the Critical Producer Grant will be required to participate in a program evaluation after the project has commenced to determine the extent to which their projects have contributed to the objectives of Critical Producer Grant.

Evaluating government programs enables the success of programs to be robustly assessed, provides confidence in program integrity and informs improvements for future programs. Funding recipients from the Critical Producer Grant may be required to partake in the evaluation of the Critical Producer Grant. Monitoring and evaluation of the Critical Producer Grant will be undertaken in line with best practice to determine the effectiveness of the Critical Producer Grant including the *NSW Government Program Evaluation Guidelines (2016)* and the requirements set out in the *NSW Treasury TC18-03 Program Evaluation*.

Evaluation elements will be embedded into the Critical Producer Grant to ensure the ability to assess effectiveness.

The evaluation will assess:

- the effectiveness of program design, implementation and delivery of Critical Producer Grant objective(s)
- the progress towards achieving program outcomes
- the alignment of delivered program outcomes to Critical Producer Grant objective(s).



Find Out More

Refer to raa.nsw.gov.au/cpg for more information, including the Industry Guidelines.

Contact us

E rural.assist@raa.nsw.gov.au

T 1800 678 593

Getting support

Frequently asked questions and other resources to assist with applications are available at raa.nsw.gov.au/cpg

If you require assistance or advice with your application, please contact rural.assist@raa.nsw.gov.au or 1800 678 593 for a referral to the appropriate team.

Complaints

Any concerns about Critical Producer Grant or individual project submissions please write to floods.recovery@regional.nsw.gov.au

If you do not agree with the way the Department handled the issue, you may wish to contact the NSW Ombudsman via ombo.nsw.gov.au

Public Acknowledgement

Under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), all projects under the Critical Producer Grant must appropriately acknowledge and recognise that it is jointly funded by the NSW Government and the Australian Government under the DRFA. The announcement of assistance must be done jointly by the NSW and Australian governments, unless otherwise agreed.

Prior agreement must be reached with the Australian Government on the nature and content of any subsequent events, announcements, promotional material or publicity relating to DRFA assistance measures. This includes but is not limited to media releases, events, social media, signage and advertising.

To obtain the required agreement, Critical Producer Grant recipients must contact the Department at floods.recovery@regional.nsw.gov.au, and the Department will in turn liaise with Resilience NSW and Australian government representatives regarding the events, announcements, promotional material or publicity.

Publications must include both the NSW and Australian governments' logos and the following disclaimer: 'Although funding for this product has been provided by both the NSW and Australian governments, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views of either Government'.

The Department will identify and inform Resilience NSW and the Australian Government of media opportunities relating to the Critical Producer Grant.

Disclaimer

Before applying for funding under this program or making any decision, recipients should seek advice from their legal, business and financial advisers to determine their eligibility for, and the terms of the funding.

The Department does not guarantee or warrant, and accepts no legal liability whatsoever arising from or connected to, the accuracy, reliability, currency or completeness of any material contained in this publication. Information in this publication is provided as general information only and is not intended as a substitute for advice from a qualified professional.

The Department recommends that users exercise care and use their own skill and judgment in using information from this publication and that users carefully evaluate the accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance of such information.

Users should take steps to independently verify the information in this publication and, where appropriate, seek professional advice. The program documents are subject to change at any time at the discretion of the Department, in consultation with Resilience NSW and the National Emergency Management Resilience and Recovery Agency.

Costs for the administration, monitoring and evaluation of the program will be met from the total budget allocated for funding delivery under the Primary Industry Support Package, Critical Producer Grant.

Government Information (Public Access) Act

Recipients should be aware that information submitted in applications and all related correspondence, attachments and other documents may be made publicly available under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)*.

Information that is deemed to be commercially sensitive will be withheld. *The Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)* makes government information accessible to the public by:

- requiring government agencies to make certain sorts of information freely available
- encouraging government agencies to release as much other information as possible
- giving the public an enforceable right to make access applications for government information
- restricting access to information only when there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

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Appendix

February and March 2022 - Severe Weather and Flooding Declaration

The NSW Government through Resilience NSW declared 62 LGAs as disaster declared with the Australian Government. These declarations are referenced as AGRN 1012.

The following AGRN 1012 LGAs are eligible for Critical Producer Grant funding:

- Armidale
- Ballina
- Bayside
- Bega
- Bellingen
- Blacktown
- Blue Mountains
- Byron
- Camden
- Campbelltown
- Canterbury-Bankstown
- Central Coast
- Cessnock
- Clarence Valley
- Coffs Harbour
- Cumberland
- Dungog
- Eurobodalla
- Fairfield
- Georges River
- Glen Innes Severn
- Goulburn Mulwaree
- Hawkesbury
- Hornsby
- Inner West
- Kempsey
- Kiama
- Ku-ring-gai
- Kyogle
- Lake Macquarie
- Lismore
- Lithgow
- Liverpool
- Maitland
- MidCoast
- Mid-Western
- Muswellbrook
- Nambucca
- Newcastle
- Northern Beaches
- Parramatta
- Penrith
- Port Macquarie-Hastings
- Port Stephens
- Queanbeyan Palerang
- Richmond Valley
- Ryde
- Shellharbour
- Shoalhaven
- Singleton
- Snowy Monaro
- Strathfield
- Sutherland
- Tenterfield
- The Hills
- Tweed
- Upper Hunter
- Waverley
- Willoughby
- Wingecarribee
- Wollondilly
- Wollongong

Find Out More

Refer to raa.nsw.gov.au/cpg
for more information.

T 1800 678 593
E rural.assist@raa.nsw.gov.au
W nsw.gov.au/criticalproducergrant

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