



The Hon. John Barilaro MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Regional New South Wales
Minister for Industry and Trade

Ref: A3059416

Ms Danica Leys
Chief Executive Officer
Country Women's Association
Level 2, 244 Coward Street
MASCOT NSW 2020

Dear Ms Leys

Thank you for your correspondence of 2 July 2019, regarding support for small businesses in drought impacted areas. Like you, I am all too aware that the impacts of drought have extended well beyond the farm gate. This is what prompted the creation of the \$170 million Drought Stimulus Package, a new program set up to fund shovel-ready infrastructure projects in regional areas, delivering fast tracked economic stimulus.

The Drought Stimulus Package will keep money circulating around regional economies, benefiting local businesses and tradespeople. To date, we have funded airport upgrades, tourism infrastructure, critical town water projects and road projects. The first tranche of projects have been announced, and we are currently identifying further infrastructure projects suitable for fast tracking.

I am very cognisant of the fact that more than a third of the state's small businesses are located in regional NSW. We are focused on prioritising taxation relief, through changes to the payroll tax regime. In fact, the 2018-19 State Budget committed to lifting the payroll tax threshold to \$1 million by 2022 across the state. This will exempt approximately 5,000 businesses from paying payroll tax, many of which are in drought-affected areas.

Support is also available for small businesses in regional NSW through the Office of the Small Business Commissioner, including providing high quality business advice. To discuss the support available, please contact Ms Robyn Hobbs, the NSW Small Business Commissioner, at Robyn.Hobbs@smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au or on (02) 8222 4802.

Rest assured the NSW Government remains committed to ensuring that regional towns and communities impacted by drought have access to the support they need. Additional assistance outlined in the most recent state Budget takes our total drought support package to \$1.8 billion. This now includes both on and off farm support. We value the opportunity to liaise with our stakeholders to improve the way we deliver drought support.

Should you wish to discuss specific policy ideas or proposals with my office, I encourage you to contact my Senior Policy Adviser, Olivia Graham on 0429 827 059.

Yours sincerely


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