



John Barilaro
Deputy Premier
Minister for Regional NSW, Industry and Trade

Adam Marshall
Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Western NSW

MEDIA RELEASE

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FUNDING TO HELP BUSHFIRE-HIT FARMERS REBUILD BOUNDARY FENCING BORDERING PUBLIC LANDS

Bushfire-affected landholders will now have access to their share of up to \$209 million to help cover the cost of rebuilding boundary fences, after Deputy Premier John Barilaro today launched the NSW Government's 'Supporting our Neighbours' project.

Mr Barilaro said the project, funded through the Government's \$2.3 billion COVID-19 stimulus package, would not only help farmers recover, but would provide a much-needed shot in the arm for regional economies at a critical time.

"Under this package, we will provide up to \$5,000 per kilometre for the purchase of materials to rebuild existing fences adjoining public lands damaged by the summer fires, which will go a long way to helping farmers cover the cost," Mr Barilaro said.

"This is a great opportunity for all landholders to engage the services of their local contractors at a time when supporting local businesses has never been more vital.

"This is about helping bushfire-affected communities get back on their feet and so we are doing everything we can to make sure that happens."

Minister for Agriculture Adam Marshall said the funding would be delivered through a one-off grant, which would also be issued retrospectively to help cover the costs already incurred by landholders.

"We know this has been a major issue for fire-affected farmers and we've listened to those concerns," Mr Marshall said.

"We will have dedicated boundary fence coordinators working with farmers to identify their needs and negotiate with the public land managers to ensure money gets into farmers' pockets as soon as possible.

"We're encouraging landholders to use this opportunity to upgrade their fencing bordering public lands and use fire resilient materials wherever possible. Landholders who have already started rebuilding can still receive a backdated payment."

For more information about the program visit www.lls.nsw.gov.au. Eligible landholders can apply for the program online at the LLS website, by expressing their interest for a callback service via one of the 11 regional LLS Facebook pages or by calling 1300 778 080.

**MEDIA: Jennifer Lugsdin | Deputy Premier | 0427 930 922
Alex Hall | Minister Marshall | 0428 420 718**

About the 'Supporting our Neighbours' project:

- Owners of rural holdings (defined by Local Government), including Aboriginal Land Councils, with boundary fencing adjoining public lands are eligible where their fencing was destroyed or significantly damaged during the 2019/20 bushfire season.
- Landholders must live in a bushfire affected disaster declared Local Government Area (LGA) to be eligible to receive funding under the 'Supporting our Neighbours' project. A full list of declared LGAs is available online at <https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/pages/publications/natural-disaster-declarations/2019-2020.aspx>
- Eligible landholders will receive a one-off grant of up to \$5,000 per kilometre to purchase fencing materials.
- The total value of each grant will be determined by the total length of the boundary fence shared with public lands.
- Landholders who have already repaired or replaced their boundary fencing bordering public lands since the 2019/20 bushfire season are also eligible for retrospective funding.
- For the purposes of these grants, Crown Lands include; National Parks, Forestry Corporation land, Traveling Stock Reserves, Crown Reserves, tenured roads and leases, and roads managed by RMS or Local Government.
- To apply, landholders must register their interest by one of three methods:
 - Contacting 1300 778 080;
 - Completing an online registration form at www.lls.nsw.gov.au; or
 - Expressing their interest for a callback service via one of the 11 regional LLS Facebook pages.

About the Application Process:

- To comply with the current social distancing requirements, the eligibility of all grant recipients will be confirmed via telephone and desk-top assessment.
- All agreements and processing of grant payments will be made electronically.
- Where a landholder does not have internet or mobile phone access, Local Land Services staff will work with them to find a suitable alternative.