

Friday, 24 August 2012

MEDIA RELEASE



Flood relief for Ungarie residents

Flood affected residents of Ungarie will be eligible for one-off relief payments from the Federal Government after Attorney General and Minister for Emergency Management Nicola Roxon today announced a special disaster relief package.

The announcement comes less than 24 hours after New South Wales Minister for Emergency Services, Mike Gallacher, rejected a second application from Bland Shire Council for a category C natural disaster declaration which would invoke Shire wide funding for affected residents, small business and farmers.

Bland Shire Mayor, Neil Pokoney described the double dose of news as bitter sweet. While bewildered by the State Government's decision to reject the application on the grounds that there was still insufficient reported damage to the farming sector, Mayor Pokoney was delighted for the flood affected residents of Ungarie who can now receive badly needed financial assistance to help them rebuild their lives.

Under the special disaster relief package, residents of Ungarie who were evacuated or had their homes damaged during the early March flooding can now apply for funding of \$1000 per adult and \$400 per child.

The Mayor praised the courage and compassion of Minister Roxon who took advice to enable support to be provided under special circumstances.

"After almost six months of fighting for justice, residents of Ungarie will finally get what they deserve," Mayor Pokoney said.

"A number of people in Ungarie still can't return to their homes and businesses.

"Some are forced to live in houses without floor coverings or walls. Some are living in the back yard in caravans. Some have had to temporarily leave town.

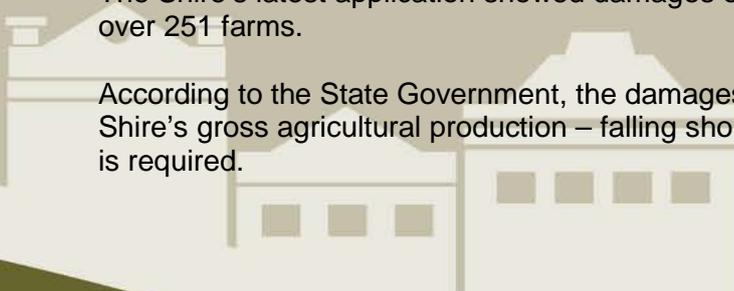
"I congratulate Minister Roxon for a common sense decision and her understanding of our plight, something her State counterpart was clearly unable to match."

While Ungarie residents are celebrating, farmers and small businesses will not receive badly needed funding as a result of the State Government's decision not to make a Category C declaration.

A spokesperson for Minister Gallacher's office yesterday informed Council that there was once again insufficient damage to the agricultural sector to warrant a Category C declaration.

The Shire's latest application showed damages of more than \$23.7 million spread over 251 farms.

According to the State Government, the damages represented 17 per cent of the Shire's gross agricultural production – falling short of the 20 per cent they now claim is required.



Friday, 24 August 2012

MEDIA RELEASE



“The goal posts have been moved again,” Mayor Pokoney said.

“Throughout this process no-one has been able to tell us what the rules are, once we overcame one hurdle they seemed to throw another one at us.

“It is another example of a flawed and farcical system.”

Bland Shire Council is leading calls for the system to be reviewed and has already attracted high level support.

“It needs to be fixed as a matter of urgency before we have another natural disaster and another community finds itself in this situation.”

Council is currently seeking clarification regarding the Shire’s gross agricultural production figures.

For more information contact
Community Relations Officer

Craig Sutton

Phone - 02 69722 266 or Email – council@blandshire.nsw.gov.au

