



John Barilaro
Deputy Premier
Minister for Regional NSW
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MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL NSW TO TAKE ON URGENT NEEDS OF THE BUSH

The NSW Government today established the new Department of Regional NSW to better coordinate support for communities, businesses and farmers in the bush that have endured drought, bushfire and flood and now face the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW John Barilaro said the department will bring together Primary Industries, Local Land Services, Resources and Geoscience and regional coordination across government to form a central agency dedicated to regional issues.

“We are urgently responding to the desperate needs of people in the regions and this new agency will work to ensure community wellbeing, resilient economies and strong key regional industries,” Mr Barilaro said.

“We know that the issues faced by the people of Cootamundra are very different to those faced in Coogee and so it is imperative we have a government designed to properly support every corner of this State.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has made a big impact on what has already been a devastating start to 2020, as farmers continue to suffer through the worst drought in recorded history and towns torn apart by bushfires continue to feel the effects months on.

“The new Department of Regional NSW will be a voice in government for people in the bush and will have a laser-like focus on the challenges and opportunities unique to regional communities, helping them to get through hardships many of us have not seen in our time.

“This department will allow a more streamlined response to regional issues as experts in areas such as primary industries, land management, resources, regional development, drought response and bushfire recovery work closer together than ever before.”

Mr Barilaro said the department will drive the delivery of recent bushfire and COVID-19 stimulus and industry recovery packages along with the NSW Government’s drought initiatives, \$1.7 billion Regional Growth Fund and \$4.2 billion Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund.

“I said that regional communities would get their fair share and to date, we have fulfilled that commitment, from securing billions in funding to the urgent measures we have rolled out for farmers, business owners and families,” Mr Barilaro said.

The Department of Regional NSW will be led by incoming Secretary Gary Barnes, currently the Coordinator General, Regional NSW, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

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