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# Senator the Hon Murray Watt

Minister for Emergency Management  
Tuesday, 07 February 2023

 Media release

## \$5 million to improve Northern Rivers drainage systems

### Joint media release with the Hon Paul Toole MP and the Hon Dugald Saunders MP

Damaged drainage systems will be cleaned out, repaired and fitted with mechanisms that will reduce the impacts of future flooding, thanks to the Albanese Labor and NSW Liberal and Nationals Governments' \$5 million Northern Rivers Drainage Reset Program.

The program is part of the \$150 million Primary Industry Support Package, co-funded under the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Federal Minister for Emergency Management, Murray Watt, said the program will support the recovery of Northern Rivers primary producers in the sugarcane, horticulture, rice, soybeans, beef and dairy industries who continue to be impacted by flood-damaged drainage systems.

"This program will provide an injection of funds to improve priority drainage channels, reducing the immediate risks to agricultural assets and surrounding communities in future flood events," Minister Watt said.

"The funding will focus on the cleaning and treatment of sediment in drains to assist in the movement of water through these river systems.

"This represents the practical and tangible ways we're improving the longer-term flood resilience of this region."

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW Paul Toole said the Northern Rivers Drainage Reset Program is a direct response to findings and recommendations from the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government's Independent Flood Inquiry.

"We want to continue to support our communities on the North Coast and Northern Rivers, as they recover from the floods last year," Mr Toole said.

"Addressing directly the drainage recommendation from the inquiry will allow our communities to support their primary producers and the wider region during future flooding events."

NSW Minister for Agriculture Dugald Saunders said an immediate solution was required to address this longstanding issue.

“Having a clean and healthy drainage system in our Northern Rivers is critical to running productive farms and mitigating future flooding events,” Mr Saunders said.

“The Northern Rivers community can take another big step forward in the rebuilding and recovery process and our farmers can get back to growing productive and profitable crops.

“I want to thank everyone involved in this journey so far, including farmers, the Drainage Union, local and NSW Government agencies and the Northern Rivers Drainage Coordinator for getting these vital drainage channels back on track.”

The \$5 million Northern Rivers Drainage Reset Program is being administered by Regional NSW in partnership with the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation, and will be rolled-out by local councils.

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