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Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Funding to tackle weeds in times of drought

The Tasmanian majority Liberal Government is committed to supporting the farmers and rural communities that are the backbone of the Tasmanian economy.

We recognise that farmer's priorities often shift in times of drought, focusing on protecting the farm business and the welfare of stock, meaning farmers often do not have the time or funds to tackle weeds.

To help address this risk, the Tasmanian Government today launched the new \$350,000 Drought and Weed Management Program to help farmers tackle weeds in a number of drought-affected areas.

The Program targets five eligible councils on Tasmania's east coast and southern Midlands' that have experienced prolonged drought conditions: Break O'Day, Glamorgan Spring Bay, Sorell, Tasman, and Southern Midlands councils.

Under the Program, one-off grants of up to \$55,000 will be available to eligible councils to directly support drought-affected farmers within their municipalities.

Funds will support:

- Subsidising the salary of a council weed inspector to work directly with farmers (up to \$25,000).
- Provide rebates up to 66% of total approved costs on invoice to farmers to undertake on-ground weed control (up to a value of \$30,000).

A highlight at today's launch was a demonstration of the weed detecting skills of "Fonz" – a detector dog that helps Glamorgan Spring Bay officers undertake surveys for serrated tussock.

The Drought and Weed Management Program is being funded as part of the Government's \$5 million Weeds Action Fund - a 2018-19 State Budget initiative. The Weeds Action Fund seeks to support farmers, community groups and organisations to tackle weeds that impact on valuable agricultural and environmental assets.

This latest program is in addition to the \$400,000 in targeted drought support that the Tasmanian Government is delivering in programs with the Rural Relief Fund, the TFGA, Rural Alive and Well, and the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, and Federal Government drought assistance.

Further information about the Drought and Weed Management Program, eligibility guidelines, assessment criteria and advice on how to apply can be found on the DPIPWE website

www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au