

PM announces extra support for flooded communities

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PM announces extra support for flooded communities

Riley Krause

SMALL businesses and not-for-profit organisations in Eugowra and across Cabonne smashed by the horrific flooding last week could be eligible for up to \$50,000 in grants.

Part of a jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, the NSW Government has identified a significant number of businesses impacted by multiple flooding events likely to face extensive clean-up and repair work.

In addition, Forbes and Cabonne councils' clean-up efforts could be significantly boosted by Local Government Recovery Grants of \$1 million after being declared disaster zones

The increased funding is to ensure a streamlined, flexible and immediate funding to support local economic and social recovery, the state government says.

The dual funding announcements come on the back of Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's trip to Eugowra on Tuesday, where he, alongside the NSW Premier



Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in Eugowra on Tuesday announcing extra funding for small business and local governments. Picture by Riley Krause.

Dom Perrottet, surveyed the damage caused by last week's 'inland tsunami' flood catastrophe.

"We know this repeated, relentless, flooding is very tough on people, and we want them to know we will be there to support them now - and as they continue to recover," Mr Albanese said.

Mr Perrottet said small businesses across flood impacted areas are doing it tough and helping them bounce back is vital.

NSW Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience and Minister for Flood Recovery, Steph Cooke said towns like Eugowra, Molong, Cudal and Canowindra, all

impacted by the floods last week, are facing an "incredibly challenging time".

"Particularly for those who have experienced flood after flood over the past 12 months and haven't been able to fully recover," she said.

"The funding being announced today will help business owners with their

immediate clean-up and rebuilding efforts."

The Prime Minister arrived by helicopter and landed at the Eugowra showground before meeting with locals.

"Thank you for what you do," Mr Albanese said, as he greeted a community nurse.

The federal MP for Calare, Andrew Gee, told Mr

Albanese many locals want to rebuild. "A lot want to stay here, so we want to get as much support for them as we can," Mr Gee said.

Mr Gee has been in Eugowra all week and asked the Prime Minister about insurance for the town, with the community prepared to remain on the banks of the Mandagery Creek and rebuild following last Monday's horrific flood.

The town was wiped out after rain flooded the creek in quick time, with the flood water rising rapidly and devastating the community. The majority of buildings and homes in Eugowra were impacted, or completely ruined. Mr Albanese toured a number of properties impacted by the floods and has visited the newly reopened Post Office, which many locals regard as the heart of Eugowra.

On Saturday, ACM's three Western daily titles, including the Central Western Daily, penned an open letter to Canberra in a bid to start a conversation on how to better prepare regional NSW

in the face of the weather extremes.

'Where have you been the last week?': PM confronted during visit

Riley Krause

A FUNDING announcement for flood victims has been slammed by a man who confronted Prime Minister Anthony Albanese regarding his whereabouts in the week since the town of Eugowra was devastated by floods.

During a one-and-a-half hour visit to the Central West community, Mr Albanese made a stop at the Eugowra post office which has now reopened.

Outside the building, Anthony Robinson, who works for a plasterer in town, addressed both Mr Albanese and NSW Premier Dominic Perrottet about the government's response to the disaster.

"There's quite a few residents in town in

their 70s on the pension and to be honest, nobody is giving them a loan to rebuild," Mr Robinson said.

"My boss has lost everything and I don't know if I've got a job to go back to, so nobody is giving me a loan to rebuild. I just want to know what we're going to get from the government to help rebuild."

After being told by the prime minister that the government would be giving "whatever support" it could, Mr Robinson addressed the nine days it took for Mr Albanese to visit Eugowra.

"Not to get off on a bad foot or a wrong foot, but ... Where have you been sir. Where have you been the last week," the plasterer said.

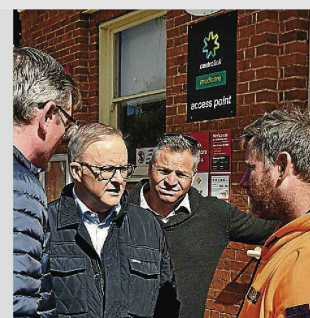
In response, the prime minister said he

had been "representing Australia." Among other things, Mr Albanese met China's President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the G20 summit. The 30-minute meeting happened on the afternoon of Tuesday, November 15, one day after floods ravaged through towns such as Eugowra.

"I've come straight away, as soon as I could," Mr Albanese added.

During his visit, Mr Albanese announced grants of up to \$50,000 for small businesses and not-for-profit organisations affected by ongoing flooding in NSW.

"It's going to help some people but like I keep on saying, it's not going to help the retirees or the people who were employed by those small businesses to help rebuild," Mr Robinson said.



Eugowra man Anthony Robinson speaking to Dominic Perrottet, Anthony Albanese and Phil Donato on Tuesday. Picture by Carla Freedman.