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Government netting grants welcomed by farmers

The NSW Farmers' Association has welcomed today's announcement by Minister for Environment Robyn Parker, that netting grants are now available for eligible orchardists in the Sydney Basin and Central Coast.

NSW Farmers' Association Horticulture Chair Peter Darley says growers have experienced increasing crop losses for the last 20 year due to damage by the threatened Grey-headed Flying-foxes and the support of the NSW Government is welcomed.

"We have many growers preparing to install netting in the lead up to the next fruit season and the Government's \$5 million funding package will be well utilised," Mr Darley said.

"Until now, previous government policies that have been in place protect the threatened grey-headed flying foxes - at a great cost to farmers.

"Today's commitment recognises it's not reasonable for farmers to effectively manage a threatened species, at an enormous cost to their businesses," Mr Darley said.

Eligible farmers will now be able to apply for grants of up to 50% of the cost of installing the netting – capped at \$20,000 per hectare. Funding will be available through the Rural Assistance Authority (RAA).

Today's announcement is a direct result of a specific election request the NSW Farmer' Association made.

Orchardists are invited to an information evening being run by the NSW Farmers' Association next Thursday 30 June at Glenorie to provide updated information about the implementation of the netting scheme and how they can apply for the grants.

Guest Speaker at the information evening will be Tom Grosskopf, Director, Landscapes and Ecosystems Conservation, Office of Environment and Heritage.

"We are also pleased to see that orchardists in other areas of NSW, where flying-fox damage is not as prevalent, are not forgotten and that they will still be able to apply for licenses under special circumstances," Mr Darley said.

Today's announcement took place on the property of orchardist and NSW Farmers' Association Treasurer Peter Comensoli, near Mangrove Mountain.

For more information about the information evening, members can contact the NSW Farmers' Association on 1300 794 000.

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