



PRIME MINISTER

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ASSISTANCE TO WESTERN AUSTRALIAN AND TASMANIAN APPLE GROWERS

The Prime Minister today announced the willingness of the Commonwealth to join with the States of Western Australia and Tasmania in examining joint dollar for dollar funding of special assistance to apple growers affected by Cyclone Alby in Western Australia and by frost and hail in Tasmania.

Mr Fraser pointed out that assistance of this type was not normally provided under the natural disaster assistance agreements.

"I am, however, aware of and sympathetic to the problems facing these primary producers in both States. That is why I have written today to both Sir Charles Court and Mr Batt indicating that the Commonwealth stands ready to help and making this offer," said Mr Fraser.

The Prime Minister said that the Commonwealth was already committed in the current financial year to providing \$33m. to the States for natural disaster assistance. The final figure could be almost double that amount.

"The Government maintains a close working relationship with State Governments in respect of all natural disasters so as to ensure that every possible assistance is given to those affected, as in the present instance," Mr Fraser said.