DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

• As of May 2018, 57.4% of the State is drought-declared – down from 66.27%.

• The 2017-18 budget for the Drought Assistance Package was $34.55 million, but expenditure is $31.09 million.

• This is attributable to a reduction in demand for DRAS ($10.89 million against a $20 million budget), but an increase in demand for the Drought Relief from Electricity Charges program ($12 million against a $6.35 million budget).

• Demand was high for the Drought Relief from Electricity Charges program, due to the drought’s impact on many coastal areas where irrigation relies on electricity for pumping water.

• Demand has fallen for DRAS, largely due to a fall in demand for the Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate (EWIR) component of the DRAS program, extensive destocking through the long drought, and a gradual improvement in conditions in parts of the State.

• Many producers have already undertaken eligible activities for the EWIR component of DRAS earlier in the drought.