

Drought funding will bring welcome relief to struggling people and families

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) welcomes the Abbott Government's announcement today that will direct increased funding and support to farmers in drought affected regions in Australia.

CSSA is the peak agency for Catholic social service agencies in this country and has a strong footprint of community engagement across regional, rural and metropolitan Australia.

"We know that prolonged drought places a strain on individuals and families not just because of financial reasons but around wellbeing and relationships in families," said the Acting Executive Director of Catholic Social Services Australia, Mrs Jackie Brady. "It is important that we as a community recognise this and support our farming communities."

"CSSA believes a safety net should be provided for people who cannot support themselves, for whatever reason. This is why we agree with the relaxing of the eligibility criteria for receipt of Farm Household Allowance. This will allow families struggling to pay for the basics to make ends meet," she said.

"Our members are reporting an increase in mental health issues in rural communities and this is taking a toll on individuals and families," she said. "Whilst we would always like to see more money directed to social and mental health programs in these communities, we are pleased to see this issue recognised in the funding package."

"We are grateful for the financial respite this funding measure brings to a crisis situation for many people in our community, CSSA is also interested in working with Government to develop longer term sustainability and viability strategies for communities in rural and remote Australia into the future." Mrs Brady concluded.

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