



assistanceguide

SOUTHERN RIVERINA NOVEMBER 2009

The following information is general in nature and although we have provided some figures, **please don't self assess**.

Take the time to speak with the **agency** concerned, a **Drought Support Worker**, or a **Rural Financial Counsellor**.

I&I NSW Drought Hotline:
1800 814 647
8.30am to 4.30 pm –
Monday to Friday

Drought Support Workers

Drought Support Workers provide support for families during drought and other emergencies, such as floods, fires and storms. This often involves supplying information on what support and assistance is available and who may be eligible, along with help in filling out the multitude of forms. Drought Support Workers can also provide personal support to people who just want to talk. This can involve talking to farmers and their families on the phone, visiting on their farms or talking to small groups of neighbours.

A significant aspect of the work is development within rural communities to help maintain social bonds and community ties that may be stretched due to the stresses that many people are under. The co-ordination of Farm Family Gatherings helps to bring people together and overcome the isolation that stress and depression can cause.

Location	Drought Support Worker	Office number	Mobile	Email
BOURKE	Lyn Leigo	(02) 6872 2077	0427 265 810	lyn.leigo@dpi.nsw.gov.au
PARKES	Jan Bruce	(02) 6816 3302	0427 257 191	jan.bruce@dpi.nsw.gov.au
GUNNEDAH	Jenny Croft	(02) 6741 8336	0429 446 417	jenny.croft@dpi.nsw.gov.au
COROWA	Don Burrowes	(02) 6033 4245	0427 324 033	don.burrowes@dpi.nsw.gov.au
DUBBO	Pip Brown	(02) 6881 1266	0429 396 697	pip.brown@dpi.nsw.gov.au
SCONE	Caroline Long	(02) 6544 4900	0428 296 332	caroline.long@dpi.nsw.gov.au
WAGGA	Lloyd Kingham	(02) 6938 1987	0427 957 535	lloyd.kingham@dpi.nsw.gov.au
GOULBURN	Dick Kearins	(02) 4828 6600	0427 781 514	dick.kearins@dpi.nsw.gov.au
HAY	Danny Byrnes	(02) 6993 1608	0428 973 141	danny.byrnes@dpi.nsw.gov.au
GRIFFITH	Lou Revelant	(02) 6960 1313	0419 167 662	lou.revelant@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Website for updates:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/pubs/drought-support-services>

Financial Support

EC Relief Payment Up to \$810.80 / fortnight (available to small business too)	Off farm income + salary - \$20,000 + net taxable farm income < \$57,000 / family, net off farm assets excluding superannuation and Farm Management Deposits < \$243,500	Centrelink Rural Services Officers Frank Amato 0427 905 110 Geoff Jones 0419 890 185 Matthew Van Zeyl 0428 270 952 Robert Doolan 0418 596 010
		Centrelink 13 23 16 www.centrelink.gov.au
Pension Bonus Scheme	a voluntary scheme that rewards people who defer claiming Age Pension. To benefit you must register as a member then continue to meet a flexible work test for at least 12 months before claiming the Pension Bonus	Centrelink Rural Services Officers Frank Amato 0427 905 110 Geoff Jones 0419 890 185 Matthew Van Zeyl 0428 270 952 Robert Doolan 0418 596 010
		Centrelink 13 23 16 www.centrelink.gov.au
EC Interest Rate Subsidies Up to \$100,000 / year (available to small business too)	Net off farm assets excluding superannuation and Farm Management Deposits < \$750,000, derive 50% income from farm, been in business > 2 years, >75% of your labour on farm. Subsidy Payments above \$300 000 require a viability assessment	Rural Assistance Authority Free Call 1800 678 593 www.raa.msw.gov.au Rural Financial Counsellors Carl Scroope / Eddie Redfern 02 6927 6622 Tony Shirley 0429 484 489 Paula Rutter 03 5881 5766 Graeme Christie 02 6954 4179
Exceptional Circumstances Exit Grant Up to \$170,000	Net assets limit of \$575,000 after selling all farm assets before 30 th June 2010. Includes Professional Advice & Training up to \$10,000 and Relocation Grant up to \$10,000. If property is in an EC declared area then claim must be submitted before sale of property	Centrelink Rural Services Officers Frank Amato 0427 905 110 Geoff Jones 0419 890 185 Matthew Van Zeyl 0428 270 952 Robert Doolan 0418 596 010
		Centrelink 13 23 16 www.centrelink.gov.au
Climate Change Adjustment Program Up to \$150,000	Farmer must have sold their farm and have net assets of less than \$350,000. Only eligible if in an area that EC declarations have finished	Centrelink Rural Services Officers Frank Amato 0427 905 110 Geoff Jones 0419 890 185 Matthew Van Zeyl 0428 270 952 Robert Doolan 0418 596 010
		Centrelink 13 23 16 www.centrelink.gov.au
Financial Information Service	A free service to help you make informed financial decisions and help you to understand the consequences of those decisions in the short, medium and long term.	Centrelink Financial Information Service David Rees 02 6937 3407 Derek Woolcott 02 6051 4243 Neil Gavan 02 6937 3484
		Centrelink 13 23 16 www.centrelink.gov.au
Tax relief Benefit: varies	More time to pay tax debts; instalment payments without interest charges	Australian Tax Office 13 11 42 option 3 www.ato.gov.au
Rural household out of tank water Up to \$400	Low income rural household, which relies on tank water for their household needs because they are not connected to a town water supply. Multiple applications may be made.	Department of Community Services 1800 018 444
		www.community.nsw.gov.au
Transport Subsidies Benefit: varies	Property must have a PIC and livestock in a drought declared area. Covers 50% transport costs for fodder, livestock below fat score 3 and stock and domestic water	Livestock Health & Pest Authority Albury 02 6040 4210 Narrandera 02 6959 2322 Wagga Wagga 02 6923 0900 Deniliquin 03 5881 1055 Jerilderie 03 5886 1203

Youth Allowance	Students whose parents receive EC Relief Payment are exempt from the Parental Means Test & may get maximum pay rate	Centrelink Rural Services Officers Frank Amato 0427 905 110 Geoff Jones 0419 890 185 Matthew Van Zeyl 0428 270 952 Robert Doolan 0418 596 010 Centrelink 13 23 16 www.centrelink.gov.au
DoCS drought relief payment Up to \$2000	Farm and non farm households NOT in an EC declared area and NOT in receipt of Centrelink income support with insufficient income or cash to meet basic living needs	Department of Community Services 1800 018 444 www.community.nsw.gov.au
Rentstart	Provide quick financial help to clients in need, particularly those facing homelessness	NSW Department of Housing 02 69 62 06 66 www.housing.nsw.gov.au

NOTES:

Business Management Support

<p>EC Interest Rate Subsidies for Small Business Up to \$100 000 / year</p>	<p>Must have a registered ABN, in business for > 2years, < 100 full time employees and > 70% turnover from activities for goods and/or services to farms in an EC area or based in a town with a population of 10 000 or less in an EC area and business substantially reliant on farmers and affected by drought.</p>	<p>Centrelink Rural Services Officers Frank Amato 0427 905 110 Geoff Jones 0419 890 185 Matthew Van Zeyl 0428 270 952 Robert Doolan 0418 596 010</p> <p>Centrelink 13 23 16 www.centrelink.gov.au</p>
<p>EC Drought Relief Payment for Small Business Up to \$810.80 / fortnight</p>	<p>Must have a registered ABN, in business for > 2years, < 100 full time employees, Non business assets < \$750 000, contribute significant labour and capital to business and derive significant income from business. Must show 70% or more income from providing goods and services to farm related activities OR in a town with population of 10 000 or less in EC area.</p>	<p>Centrelink Rural Services Officers Frank Amato 0427 905 110 Geoff Jones 0419 890 185 Matthew Van Zeyl 0428 270 952 Robert Doolan 0418 596 010</p> <p>Centrelink 13 23 16 www.centrelink.gov.au</p>
<p>FarmReady Up to \$1,500</p>	<p>Primary producers (which includes farmers, fishers and foresters), immediate family members, members of the management team or Indigenous land manager.</p>	<p>Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries 1800 087 670 www.farmready.gov.au</p>
<p>Professional Advice & Planning Grants Up to \$5,500</p>	<p>Net off farm assets excluding superannuation and FMD's < \$750,000, been in business > 2 years. Those where 6 months have lapsed from date that Drought Management Plan was completed may apply for \$2,200.</p> <p>Only eligible if in an EC declared area.</p>	<p>Centrelink Rural Services Officers Frank Amato 0427 905 110 Geoff Jones 0419 890 185 Matthew Van Zeyl 0428 270 952 Robert Doolan 0418 596 010</p> <p>Centrelink 13 23 16 www.centrelink.gov.au</p>
<p>Climate Change Adjustment Program Advice and Training Up to \$5,500</p>	<p>Assist farmers to obtain professional advice and training to adjust and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Must have net assets of less than \$1,500,000, including farm assets and the principal residence.</p> <p>Only eligible if not in an EC declared area.</p>	<p>Centrelink Drought Assistance Hotline Frank Amato 0427 905 110 Geoff Jones 0419 890 185 Matthew Van Zeyl 0428 270 952 Robert Doolan 0418 596 010</p> <p>Centrelink 13 23 16 www.centrelink.gov.au</p>
<p>Special Conservation Scheme Up to \$150,000</p>	<p>Net Assets Limit \$5,000,000. Submit an application for a low interest loan for up to 90% of costs before work is started on hail netting, soil conservation work, stock and domestic water supply, noxious weed control, upgrading irrigation systems, desilting dams, hay and grain storage, and perennial pasture</p>	<p>Rural Assistance Authority 1800 678 593 www.raa.nsw.gov.au</p>
<p>Farm Management Deposits</p>	<p>Farmers can set aside pre-tax income in good years for use in low income years. EC declared farmers can access FMD's within 12 months and retain tax benefits</p>	<p>Australian Tax Office 13 28 66 www.ato.gov.au</p>
<p>Agstart Benefit: Various grants</p>	<p>People aged 18 - 35 at the start of their time in agriculture and agribusiness. Apply for reimbursement of stamp duty, traineeships, succession planning, mentoring, setting up in agribusiness, exporting</p>	<p>Rural Assistance Authority 1800 672 593 Jacinta Townsend 6391 3081 www.raa.nsw.gov.au</p>

Financial counselling Benefit: a free service	The Rural Financial Counselling Service provides free, confidential rural financial counselling to primary producers	Rural Assistance Authority Rural Financial Counsellors Carl Scroope / Eddie Redfern 6927 6622 Tony Shirley 0429 484 489 Paula Rutter 03 5881 5766 Graeme Christie 02 6954 4179
Workcover Safety Package Up to \$1700	Free PTO guards valued up to \$200, silo safety improvements up to \$1000 and eligible farmers and business operators can apply for a \$500 rebate after attending a WorkCover safety workshop then investing in safety	13 10 50 www.workcover.nsw.gov.au.
Business Improvement and Recovery Strategies Benefit: \$3000	Small regional businesses able to apply for grant to directly implement business improvement & recovery strategies or engage external expertise to help sustain their operations during and beyond the drought	NSW Department of State and Regional Development Riverina – Jane Barnes 6921 6422 Murray – Peter Whitehead 6041 4808 www.dsrd.nsw.gov.au
Business Sustainability Program	This program offers strategic and practical support to established regional businesses experiencing distress due to a recent decline in turnover caused by the loss of major customers, markets or consumer confidence. Assistance of up to \$5,000 is available subject to eligibility criteria.	NSW Department of State and Regional Development Riverina – Jane Barnes 6921 6422 Murray – Peter Whitehead 6041 4808 www.dsrd.nsw.gov.au
Small Business Payroll Tax Relief	Businesses that support the farm industry sector with up to 200 employees.	NSW Department of State and Regional Development Riverina – Jane Barnes 6921 6422 Murray – Peter Whitehead 6041 4808 www.dsrd.nsw.gov.au
Caring for our country Up to \$50,000	Individuals or groups can undertake small projects through the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust for on-farm environmental work or work that improves sustainable agricultural practices.	Natural Heritage Trust 1800 303 863 www.nht.gov.au
Catchment Management Authorities	Various grants programs that can assist in the environmental development of your property	Murray CMA 03 5880 1408 Murrumbidgee CMA 6932 3232
AusIndustry	Australian Government's business program delivery division with more than 35 business products. Innovation grants; tax & duty concessions; venture capital; small business services; & support industry competitiveness.	Ausindustry Hotline 13 28 46
Farm Debt Mediation	A farmer can within 21 days of receipt of the Form 1 Section 8 Notice, advise the creditor, & choose from the list of accredited mediators provided by the NSW RAA before a creditor can take possession of property or take action under a farm mortgage	Rural Assistance Authority Free Call 1800 678 593 Kevin Eckerick 6391 3013 www.raa.nsw.gov.au
Legal Information Access Centre	Free access to law information through the State Library, and a referral guide to free legal advice and assistance is available.	(02) 9273 1558 www.liac.sl.nsw.gov.au
Legal Aid Help Line	Solicitors and other trained staff available to answer legal questions	1300 888 529 www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au
Fair Trading	Free financial counselling, personal finance or mortgage negotiation, consumer and tenancy advice	133 220 www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au

Health and Wellbeing

Health Care card Benefit: various concessions	Those in receipt EC Relief Payments may obtain health concessions such as cheaper prescriptions, household, educational, recreational and transport services.	Centrelink Rural Services Officers Frank Amato 0427 905 110 Geoff Jones 0419 890 185 Matthew Van Zeyl 0428 270 952 Robert Doolan 0418 596 010 Centrelink 13 23 16 www.centrelink.gov.au
Low Income Health Care Card	Those people earning < \$450 / week single or < \$783 / week partnered with one child may obtain health concessions such as cheaper prescriptions, household, educational, recreational and transport services.	Centrelink Rural Services Officers Frank Amato 0427 905 110 Geoff Jones 0419 890 185 Matthew Van Zeyl 0428 270 952 Robert Doolan 0418 596 010 Centrelink 13 23 16 www.centrelink.gov.au
Primary Health Care Nurse & Community Support Worker	GP referral, assist farmers coping with stress by providing crisis and personal counselling support, and mental health education.	Riverina Division of General Practice Community Support Workers Sarah Heinjus 0429 653 935 Libby Hanlon 0429 924 355
Rural Mental Health Project Officers	Provide information to give communities a better understanding of mental health issues	Greater Southern Area Health Service Merylyn Limbrick 0428 249 719 Nicola Barrie 0438 694 192
Isolated Patients Travel & Accommodation Assistance Scheme	Financial assistance for isolated & rural people required to travel more than 100km for specialist medical treatment not available in their own area.	Department of Health GSAHS Health Transport Unit 1800 800 511
Accessline	Greater Southern Area Health Service 24 hour counselling & referral service	1800 800 944
Rural Mental Health Support Line	provides counselling and related support to farmers and others in rural areas in NSW	1800 201 123
Social Worker Rural Psychologist	provide counselling and support to Centrelink customers with difficult personal or family issues	Centrelink Jeanette Lloyd 0400 428 003 Heather Downey 02 6051 4110 Stuart Rennie 02 6051 4278 Centrelink 13 23 16 www.centrelink.gov.au
Womens Information and Referral Service	Free, confidential and culturally sensitive service offer a first stop contact point for women seeking information and referrals on a wide range of issues affecting women.	1800 817 227 www.women.nsw.gov.au
Centacare	Counsellors can visit farms to provide Family and Relationships advice and support	Finley - Peter Hanson 0407 671 249
Relationships Australia	Counsellors can visit farms to provide Family and Relationships advice and support	David Post 6921 3597 0488 239 100 www.relationships.com.au
Intereach	Counsellors can visit farms to provide Family and Relationships advice and support	Andrea Simson 0434 730 762 Gundagai – Sheridan McGregor 0434 730 810
Mission Australia	Counsellors can visit farms to provide Family and Relationships advice and support	Kim Halhead 0417 252 286
Mensline	Offers 24/7 professional, anonymous telephone support, information and referral using approaches that suit the way men think and behave	1300 789 978 www.menslineaus.org.au
Kids Help Line	Australia's only free, confidential and anonymous telephone & online counselling service for young people between 5 -25	1800 55 1800 www.kidshelp.com.au
Headspace	Walk in counselling for 12 – 25 year olds	6921 8891 www.headspace.org.au
Chaplaincy Australia (NSW)	Providing at-the-farm-gate practical care and support for rural families. Also enjoy a good yarn!	Ron Westbrook 0448 040 374

Presbyterian Inland Mission	Provides care and support for rural families	Mike Willsmore	0417 532 196
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Community Support and Networks

Community Water Grants Up to \$50,000	Grants available for water saving, efficiency, water recycling, water treatment – improving surface & groundwater health.	www.communitywatergrants.gov.au	
Local Answers	Combat economic and social disadvantage and ensure that government investment builds socially inclusive communities	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs Hotline: 1800 607 839	
'Just Ask' rural mental health Benefit: help & support	Information service and referral for people with mental health problems, as well as to concerned friends, relatives.	Lifeline 1300 131 114	
Mental health support Benefit: help & support	Services and tools to assist farmers & irrigators managing their businesses and coping with stress: includes books and online resources and personal counselling support.	Rural Mental Health Support Line 1800 201 123	
Community Transport Program	Provides transport to people without access to regular, affordable & appropriate transport to medical, business, & social engagements.	Ministry of Transport Andrew Proctor 6921 3588	
Wagga Cares	Free holidays, food hampers, community breakfasts and support.	John Foord Wayne Begley 837	0427 315 684 0448 983
Red Cross	Red Cross cares for people whose lives have been touched by tragedy or disaster.	David Clark	1800 422 717
Anglicare	Provides emergency relief, counselling and welfare services to the general community		6937 7500
St Vincent de Paul	Personal support, farm visits, advocacy, food, clothing and some financial assistance	Wendy Chalmers	6921 3111
The Salvation Army	Counselling, referral and limited household financial assistance in emergencies	Les Barrass	0427 720 071
Aussie Helpers	Helping fight poverty and lifting spirits		1300 665 232
Presentation Sisters	Rural outreach service	Bernadette Pattison Ann McRae	0427 800 189 0428 388 044
Uniting Church	Rural Chaplain Service and some emergency financial assistance	Kel Hodge 6344 2920 Julie Greig 0429 344 456	

Workforce Skilling

Job Search	Includes services notification, and access to Intensive Support job search training - EC declared areas.	Job Search 13 62 68	
Productivity Places Program Benefit: Free training up to \$3000	Training places allocated to job network enrolled people wanting to gain or upgrade their skills in aged care, or Transport and Logistics	Riverina Community College (RCC Employment & Training) Judy Thompson 1800 000 212	
TAFE courses Benefit: most courses for \$50	People who hold a current EC certificate may be eligible for training courses at a cost of \$50.	Riverina Institute of TAFE Graeme Anderson Wagga Wagga 6939 5040 Diane Blachut Temora/West Wyalong 6977 3717	

Drought Force Work for the dole Benefit: Newstart/Youth Allowance plus extra \$20.80 a fortnight & up to \$1,600 training credits	Gives people who lose their job because of the drought the opportunity to work on properties or in the community. People receiving income support who work 30 hours or more a week, do not have to look for work while participating in the program.	Workplace 1800 004 226
Apprenticeship declared drought incentives Benefit: up to \$3,000	The exceptional circumstances drought declared incentive \$1,500 on commencement and \$1,500 on completion applies to Certificate II rural, agriculture and horticulture Australian Apprenticeships where the primary producer holds the Exceptional Circumstances Drought Declared Area certificate.	Australian Apprenticeships 1800 639 629
PROfarm	Accredited short courses to meet the needs of farmers, primary industries, agribusiness and the community	Industry & Investment NSW Simone Fuller 6951 2544

Schooling and Education

Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Up to \$1,000	Additional \$1,000 to AIC Additional Boarding Allowance, & an ongoing supplementary allowance of \$1,000 for students who receive an AIC Distance Education Allowance.	Drought Assistance Hotline 13 23 16
Additional school funding Up to \$10,000	Additional funding for both government and non-government schools in Exceptional Circumstances declared areas.	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 1300 363 079
Isolated Children's Parent's Association (ICPA)	ICAP (Aust) is a voluntary national parent body dedicated to ensuring that all geographically isolated students have equality with their non-isolated peers, of access to an appropriate education.	ICPA President David Cameron 6796 5166 www.icpa.com.au
Private Vehicle conveyance scheme	Where there is no public transport available (mainly in rural areas) parents can apply for a subsidy towards transporting students to school by private vehicle.	Speak to your school or visit www.transport.nsw.gov.au
Masonic Youth Welfare Fund	Provides direct financial assistance to students under 25 to complete full time education.	www.nswyouth.com.au
Bush Childrens Education Foundation	Assistance is available to subsidise the boarding expenses of primary and secondary aged children from families in a remote area. Boarding places may be at country boarding schools or community operated hostels. Education Scholarships are also available for year 11 and 12 (academic excellence / school community service)	www.bcef.org.au

The business community and various industry bodies have a range of drought-specific assistance measures & grants available also.

Acknowledgements

Prepared by Lloyd Kingham, Drought Support Worker, I & I NSW Wagga Wagga.

Updated for Southern Riverina by Don Burrowes, Drought Support Worker I & I NSW Corowa

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File reference