



Additional funding for social and emotional counselling

New Australian Government Assistance for Drought-Affected Farmers and Their Communities

The Australian Government has improved drought assistance for farmers in areas severely affected by drought and introduced new assistance for the agricultural dependent small businesses that rely on them. These measures recognise the unprecedented severity, length and extent of the current drought, and its impact on rural and regional communities, the environment, and the broader Australian economy.

Additional funding for social and emotional counselling

While the drought is having an enormous impact on the environment and economies of rural and regional areas, it is also having a severe impact on the emotional wellbeing of people in farming families and the wider community. As part of the drought assistance measures announced on 24 October 2006, additional social and emotional counselling services will be made available through the Family Relationship Services Program. Organisations funded under the program provide face-to-face, confidential and personal counselling and support measures to drought-affected families and individuals.

People who are experiencing personal difficulties or stress, or who are concerned about a friend or family member, should make contact with a counsellor who can assist them.

Centrelink psychologists and social workers are providing face to face counselling through Centrelink's Customer Service Centres and Centrelink's social workers also provide a telephone counselling service through the Drought Assistance Hotline.

Where can I get further information?

Contact help through Centrelink Drought Assistance Hotline **13 23 16** or visit the Centrelink website at **www.centrelink.gov.au**

Further details on social and emotional counselling can be obtained from the Family Relationship Services Program of the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs at **www.facs.gov.au/frsp**