



## **Rural Women's Network – Special Bushfire/Drought Edition – February 2007 E-Bulletin**

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## **Government/Corporate Assistance and Information**

### **1. Bushfire information - Country Fire Authority (CFA)**

- current fires and incidents
- Community meetings
- fire restrictions
- preparing 'bushfire plans'

#### **More information**

Phone 1800 240 667 or visit [www.cfa.vic.gov.au/](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/)

### **2. Drought, bushfire and water information - Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE)**

- drought assistance
- water restrictions
- water conservation and rebates
- bushfires

#### **More information**

Phone 136 186 or visit [www.dse.vic.gov.au/](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/)

### **3. Drought information - Department of Primary Industries (DPI)**

A range of Victorian drought information and links.

#### **More information**

Phone 136 186 or visit <http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/>

### **4. Bushfire, drought and health information - Department of Human Services (DHS)**

Information, practical advice and useful links for emergency management, including bushfires.  
Phone 1300 650 172 or visit [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency)

Drought Personal Support Line.

Phone 1300 655 969 or visit [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency/em\\_events/drought\\_counselling.htm](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency/em_events/drought_counselling.htm)

Information on rural health and farm safety.

Phone 1300 126 637 or visit [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/)

### **5. Rural Financial Counselling Service**

The Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) Program provides grants to state, regional and community level organisations to provide free and impartial rural financial counselling to primary producers, fishers and small rural businesses who are suffering financial hardship and who have no alternative sources of impartial support.

#### **More information**

Phone 1800 686 175 or visit [www.ffa.gov.au/](http://www.ffa.gov.au/)

### **6. Grants for small sporting organisations - Department for Victorian Communities (DVC)**

Emergency grants to replace essential sports equipment, for not-for-profit community-based clubs and organisations.

**More information**

Phone 1300 366 356 or visit <http://www.grants.dvc.vic.gov.au/>

**7. Drought Force Initiative – Department of Employment and Workplace Relations**

Drought Force is an Australian Government program that helps rural communities retain and build the skills of their local workforce during drought. It is made up of skilled volunteers and people from the local community who have lost their jobs as a result of drought, who then work together on private or public land on activities such as fence mending, maintaining irrigation channels and hand feeding and watering stock.

**More information:**

Visit [www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/DroughtForce](http://www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/DroughtForce)

**8. Drought assistance programs for small rural businesses - Business Victoria**

Drought assistance programs from Regional Development Victoria.

Phone 132215 or visit [www.business.vic.gov.au/](http://www.business.vic.gov.au/)

**9. Financial assistance for farmers and rural communities - ANZ Bank**

The ANZ provides farmers and rural communities with financial assistance in three critical areas: community grants; short-term financial relief and direct financial counselling.

**Community Grants**

“Seeds of Renewal” program, for not-for-profit organisations from towns with a population of less than 15,000, provides up to \$10,000 to fund projects that help communities prepare for, survive and recover from drought. <http://www.anz.com/australia/rural/CommunityCommitment/seeds.asp>

**Short-term financial relief**

- Capitalising interest or establishing interest-only repayments on loans
- Loan restructuring to minimise financial outgoings during this adverse trading period and waiving associated fees
- Provision of additional carry-on finance to meet short-term needs
- Waiving fees associated with accessing deposit funds ahead of the maturity date

*Customers are advised to talk with ANZ as soon as possible, with responses developed according to individual needs.*

**Financial Counselling**

Free one-off face-to-face sessions run by qualified financial planners. Available to all rural people (don't need to be an ANZ customer). The session covers the financial options available as well as ensuring that people have considered the relevant government support services.

**More information**

Phone 131314 or visit [www.anz.com/australia/rural/](http://www.anz.com/australia/rural/)

**10. Bushfire Recovery Financial Assistance – Rural Finance**

**Clean-up and Restoration Grant**

Up to \$3,000 for primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profit organisations, for removal of debris and business restoration. Applications must be made within 6 months of the impact of the fire.

## Bushfire Assistance Loans

Finance can be considered for small businesses in need of concessional financial assistance as a result of losses or damage caused bushfires. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the business has reasonable prospects of trading profitably in the future, including a capacity to service borrowings.

### More information

Visit [www.ruralfinance.com.au/](http://www.ruralfinance.com.au/)

## 11. Relief package for Gippsland tourism – Telstra

Telstra is offering extended payment arrangements to tourism operators in the bushfire-affected areas of Gippsland.

### More information

Phone Telstra Country Wide, Gippsland, 5142 4540

## 12. Federal funding for drought and bushfire victims - Centrelink

Drought: phone 132 316 or visit [www.centrelink.gov.au/drought](http://www.centrelink.gov.au/drought)

Bushfire: visit <http://www.centrelink.gov.au/bushfire>

Farmer assistance: phone 1800 050 585

## *Community Organisations' Initiatives*

## 13. Bushfire relief and assistance - Gippsland Emergency Relief Fund

Provides relief and assistance to people living in the Gippsland Municipalities of

- Bass Coast
- Baw Baw
- East Gippsland
- Latrobe
- South Gippsland, and
- Wellington

who suffer injury, loss or damage from natural disasters.

Phone 5177 4635 or 5176 1365.

People seeking assistance are recommended to contact their Local Government Emergency Relief Centre at Traralgon, Sale or Bairnsdale in the first instance.

Donations can be made at any branch of the National Australia Bank in Victoria or via post (PO Box 508 Traralgon 3844).

## *Specific Community Responses*

## 14. Spirit of the Bush free concert – supporting farmers through drought - Horsham

### 17 March 2.00 pm – 10.00 pm - Longerenong Field days site

Featuring Lee Kernaghan, Gina Jeffreys, Tania Kernaghan, Neil Murray and The McClymonts and many more top acts and local artists.

### Bookings essential

### More information

Phone Horsham Visitor Centre on 1800 633 218, email [tourism@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:tourism@hrcc.vic.gov.au), or visit [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/)

### **15. Free mini-expo – Yackandandah**

Sunday 4 February – Yackandandah Public Hall. Presented by Yackandandah Community Education Network.

- 'Playing safely on farms' – a talk for parents
- Free bbq
- Department of Primary Industries presentation on managing small farms in drought conditions and feeding of animals
- CFA presentation on what to do before, during and after a bushfire

#### **More information**

Register on 02 6027 1743

### **16. Drought Resource Centre – Nhill**

The Nhill Drought Resource Centre is open Fridays and Saturdays, in a shop provided rent-free by Mulhallens of Nhill, and is fully staffed by volunteers. The Centre raises money for the emergency relief fund of the local hospital through the sale of consignment and donated clothes. Since opening in November the centre has put back over \$3000 into the community. The centre will be formally opened on International Women's Day, Thursday 8 March.

#### **More information**

Phone Lisa Mostyn on 5391 9236 or 0427 349 134

### **17. Sponsor a Cow – Stanhope**

Stanhope, a small dairy farming town in the Goulburn Valley of Northern Victoria, has launched a unique and novel way of assisting Victorian Dairy Farmers to save some of their breeding stock. The concept of "Sponsor a Cow" is for individuals, clubs, groups, businesses, schools etc. to raise funds to assist Dairy farmers to purchase hay to feed some of their cows, in particular their breeding stock.

It is envisaged all funds raised will be distributed to participating Dairy Farmers, firstly in the Stanhope District, followed by the whole of the Goulburn Valley and possibly Victoria wide, depending on the amount of support the program receives.

#### **More information**

Visit <http://sponsorcaw.org/index.htm>

## ***Courses, workshops and conferences***

### **18. Pathways to Rural Leadership Course - Canberra**

#### **Applications close 5 pm Monday, 5 March 2007**

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is seeking young people (18 – 35) who are interested in taking on greater representational and professional responsibilities in the agricultural, fishery and forestry industries to take part in the inaugural *Pathways to Rural Leadership* Course.

#### **More information**

Phone 02 6271 6633, email [industrypartnerships@daff.gov.au](mailto:industrypartnerships@daff.gov.au) or visit [www.yarn.gov.au](http://www.yarn.gov.au)

## **19. Art workshops – Halls Gap, Wartook, Willaura, Deep Lead**

A series of workshops with regional artists to explore the changed landscape of the Grampians following the 2006 fires.

### **More information**

Bookings essential. Phone 5356 4616

## **20. Forum – Which Direction for Sustainability? – Melbourne**

Melbourne Conversations and Future Leaders – economists and environmentalists talking.  
Thursday 15 February 6.00pm, Federation Square, Melbourne.

### **More information**

Visit [www.futureleaders.com.au/discussions/](http://www.futureleaders.com.au/discussions/)

**This is a free event but please RSVP:** [rsvp@futureleaders.com.au](mailto:rsvp@futureleaders.com.au)

*Please note: information is a summary of support available. Contact the organisations for full details & eligibility criteria.*

*Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this document was accurate at the time of publication, the State of Victoria through the Rural Women's Network Coordination Unit and the Department for Victorian Communities, accepts no responsibility for any errors, omissions, mistakes or mis-statements contained in this document. The State of Victoria expressly disclaims any responsibility for any total or partial reliance on this document for anything undertaken or omitted to be undertaken in consequence of reliance on this document. The State of Victoria excludes liability for any loss or damage suffered by any person resulting in any way from the use of, or reliance upon, this document.*