



Media Release

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beyondblue urges those in drought-affected areas to get support for their mental health

The severe drought affecting parts of rural Australia is causing significant distress for many people – financially, physically and emotionally.

beyondblue wants to reassure these communities that support is available. Below is a list of helpful resources for those experiencing financial hardship, stress and psychological distress.

“People in rural Australia are known for their resilience, but even the most resilient among us need extra support at times. We want everyone to know that support is available and encourage people to seek advice. Asking for support is a sign of strength – not weakness,” *beyondblue* CEO Georgie Harman said.

Financial hardship, isolation and stigma can take a toll on farmers in distress, placing their mental health at risk.

“You are not alone and you don’t have to go it alone,” Ms Harman said.

beyondblue commends all those involved in the relief effort – state and federal governments, mental health organisations, fundraising bodies, non-profits, private companies and the many other groups and individuals rallying to support our farming, rural and regional communities at this difficult time.

The Commonwealth will invest \$11.4 million in mental health support initiatives.

If you are worried about yourself or someone else and need to talk, the ***beyondblue* Support Service** is available by phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week on **1300 22 4636**.

How *beyondblue* is supporting farmers, their families and rural communities

The *beyondblue* online forum is a safe, anonymous space for people affected by the drought to seek support from fellow farmers and talk about how they are feeling. A dedicated discussion is available at bb.org.au/drought-support-forum.

The *beyondblue* Support Service also offers webchat and email options at www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support. Trained mental health professionals can provide free and confidential short-term counselling and offer referrals to local support services.

#YouCanTalk - backed by seven national mental health organisations – provides practical information about what to look out for and how to talk safely to a mate or someone you love if you think they are at risk of suicide: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/suicide-prevention>

NewAccess is a free coaching service that provides practical tools and advice to support those in distress. The service is currently available by phone or face-to-face to people living in parts of Queensland, New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory.

Please visit www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/newaccess/where-are-your-access-coaches-located to find out whether NewAccess is available in your area.

You can access the service without a referral from a GP or mental health professional.

The *beyondblue* website has information about how to support yourself and others, as well as information about the signs and symptoms of anxiety and depression. Useful links include:

- [Looking after yourself after a disaster](#)
- [Taking care of yourself after retrenchment or financial loss](#)
- [Information about depression and anxiety](#)



- [Checklist to understand whether you might be experiencing anxiety or depression](#)
- [Types of professionals you can visit to seek support for your mental health](#)

Other helplines and resources

Lifeline: **13 11 14**

Aussie Helpers:

- Virtual psychologist - call **1300 665 234** or text **0488 807 266** or visit <https://aussiehelpers.org.au/aussie-helpers-virtual-psychologist-for-drought-affected-farmers/>
- Donations - www.aussiehelpers.org.au

Farmer Assistance Hotline: **132 316** (operated by Commonwealth Department of Human Services for information about Farm Household Allowance, income support for farmers)

Rural Financial Counsellor Service: **1800 686 175** (for advice about locating counsellors in your area)

NSW Rural Mental Health Support Line: **1800 201 123**

NSW Mental Health Line: **1800 011 511**

1300 MH CALL: **1300 642255** (Qld mental health telephone triage service that provides the first point of contact to public mental health services)

Fact sheets and information

- Rural and Remote Mental Health: www.rrmh.org.au
- Farmer wellbeing resource - <https://www.ifarmwell.com.au>
- Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health has a page dedicated to self-help resources <https://www.crrmh.com.au/get-help-now/self-help-resources/>
- National Rural Health Alliance has a [Rural mental health help sheet](#).
- [National Centre for Farmer Health](#) based in Hamilton, Victoria. They have some information on suicide prevention, depression and stress, including a [stress tool](#). Also a resource called [Managing Stress on the Farm](#).
- [Managing the pressures of farming](#) resource

For people wanting to support drought-affected families

We advise people to look out for their neighbours and friends who are doing it tough. Encourage them to talk about their problems with trusted families, friends and community leaders.

ABC provides [helpful information for people wanting to provide donations](#) of food or money.

Contact: media@beyondblue.org.au
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beyondblue acknowledges community partners Zoetis, Steel Blue and QANTAS in their efforts to support our work with regional and rural Australian communities. To learn about these projects, [visit the *beyondblue* partners webpage.](#)

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