

# Drought Assistance Initiatives

## Name of initiative

## Drought Health Services and Community Support

### Purpose

To protect and promote the mental health and wellbeing of rural communities experiencing drought and rural change.

To build on the health service system and workforce developments achieved by the 2006-08 drought program by integrating good practice into the mainstream service system and developing a more sustainable response to the needs of communities affected by drought and rural change.

Emergency relief assistance will be provided to support families at Christmas time and the commencement of the new school year.

### Details

A '**Strengthening Community Wellbeing Planning and Practice Guide**' will be developed and published. The 'good practice' publication will include:

- Principles of effective planning and practice (drawn from the Department of Human Services evaluation of the Sustaining Community Wellbeing program and the Strengthening Community Wellbeing Grants program projects – see below)
- Tools and resources, and
- Good practice case studies (also drawn from the evaluation and Strengthening Community Wellbeing Grants program projects).

The 'good practice' publication will be distributed and launched at a **Rural Change and Community Wellbeing Forum**.

A **Sustaining Community Wellbeing Grants Program** will enable targeted assistance and capacity to be provided to the most vulnerable local government areas in the Grampians, Loddon Mallee and Hume regions, enabling the building of health promotion, service coordination and workforce development 'good practice' emerging from the drought program.

Mainstream services will be provided with additional capacity to provide rural communities in the most drought affected areas in the Grampians, Loddon Mallee and Hume regions with **accessible and appropriate counselling services**.

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## Details continued

Clinical leadership and support will be provided to counsellors.

Additional 'No Bull' workshops to be delivered by trained counsellors.

An **emergency relief** program will provide additional support to VicRelief Foodbank, enabling further emergency relief assistance to be provided by local agencies to families in drought affected areas. It will provide Christmas hampers, Christmas toys and assistance with 'back to school' costs as well as a food relief program.

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## Who is eligible?

The Department of Human Services will contact mainstream services in the most drought affected areas of the Grampians, Loddon Mallee and Hume regions to assess eligibility for additional counselling capacity and access to clinical leadership, support and training.

Eligibility for application for the Sustaining Community Wellbeing Grants Program will be described in the Sustaining Community Wellbeing Grants Program Guidelines to be distributed by the Department of Human Services.

Emergency relief agencies in the most drought affected areas of Grampians, Loddon Mallee and Hume regions will be contacted by VicRelief Foodbank.

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## Further information

For more information please call 136 186.

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Updated October 2008

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