

## Financial and Business Services

Financial and Business Support and Advice.

### **Rural Financial Counsellor**

Rural Financial Counsellors provide confidential support and an advisory service for farm families. They can help by assessing current financial positions, preparing budgets, reviewing contracts with financial institutions, helping with loan applications and providing information on government assistance schemes.

### **Monaro Rural Financial Counselling Service**

Bruce Bashford 02 6452 5059

### **Centrelink Financial Service**

Centrelink's Financial Information Service (FIS) is an education and expert information service available to everyone in the community. FIS assists people to make informed decisions about investment and financial issues for their current and future needs. FIS is independent, free and confidential and provides a service by phone, by appointment and through seminars.

The FIS is also able to help drought affected farmers and small businesses in Exceptional Circumstances (EC) declared areas with information relating to EC Relief payments and support measures (interest rate relief for small businesses in EC declared areas. Interest rate relief for producers are handled by the RAA). Eligibility conditions apply. Eligible livestock producers on the south coast in the local government areas of Bega and Eurobodalla can apply for interest subsidies and can have access to income support until 8 December 2004.

People who operate small businesses in these areas who are experiencing a downturn as a result of the drought can also apply for interest rate relief on new and existing loans.

For producers who are experiencing severe financial difficulty, and cannot borrow any further against their assets, the Commonwealth provides assistance through the Agriculture, Advancing Australia (AAA) Farm Help program.

*For forms or more information ring the Centrelink Drought Assistance Line on 13 23 16 or contact: Jeff Hope, Bega on 02 6491 8960.*

### **NSW DOCS 1800 018 444**

The Department of Community Services administers the Community Disaster Relief Fund and channels money raised through public appeal to people adversely affected by disasters. The following funds are currently available:

**Drought Assistance:** Grants of up to \$2,000 to farm and non-farm households located in a drought affected area for payment of essential household bills. Low-income non-farm households may apply for cash grants up to \$400.

### **NSW Rural Assistance Authority**

RAA is administering drought measures that include:

- Subsidies for transport of fodder, water and stock. Contact your local Rural Lands Protection Board.  
*Contact the NSW RAA on 1800 678 593 or [www.raa.nsw.gov.au](http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au)*
- Special conservation loans of up to \$100,000 to landholders who would like to construct water storages or undertake works to improve sustainability.  
*Contact the NSW RAA on 1800 678 593.*
- Consideration for deferral of repayments on NSW RAA loans where temporary repayment difficulties as a result of the drought can be demonstrated.

Contact the NSW RAA on 1800 678 593.

### **In EC (Exceptional Circumstances) Declared Areas**

- Interest subsidies for loans for farm enterprises in financial difficulty due to extreme drought in areas fully declared EC.

*Contact your local Rural Lands Protection Board or NSW RAA.*

### **Department of State and Regional Development**

- DSRD delivers business drought assistance to regional businesses severely affected by the drought that are reliant on farmers for their income. Two programs exist - one for small businesses needing advice and one for payroll tax relief (for larger businesses). Eligibility criteria apply.

*All applications in South East region go through Goulburn office. Enquiries to Barry McDonald or Stewart Thompson on 02 4821 8000.*

### **NSW Farmers Industrial Association**

- Farmers who are receiving Exceptional Circumstances Relief Payments can now apply for a postponement of the National Wage Increase that came into effect on 31 October 03. This will mean a saving of \$17 pw per employee. You must be a member of NSW Farmers Industrial Association, be in receipt of EC payments and employ staff under the Federal Pastoral Industry Award. For more information call the Member Service Centre on 1300 794 000.

### **Snowy-Monaro Business Enterprise Centre Inc 02 6452 5392**

- The BEC provides services designed to assist people who wish to start their own business, as well as those who wish to expand, develop or better manage their existing business. Assistance is provided to operators of micro, small and medium size enterprises, including: Business Advice; Training / mentoring; Business Planning; Networking; Linkages to Government Grants; Resources and Research; Access to Partners and Service Providers.