



## Supporting Tasmania's Farmers

Key rural interest groups and the Department of Primary Industries & Water (DPIW) are preparing a multi-pronged response to Tasmania's erratic and worsening weather conditions.

In addition to TFGA and DPIW, representatives from the Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS), Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group (TAPG), and Rural Youth Tasmania met in December to discuss identifying the areas from which statistical information will be drawn in preparation for a formal Exceptional Circumstances (EC) Application. Whilst it is recognised that there are no areas in Tasmania that would comply with the required criteria, the Drought Task Force has commenced gathering statistical information for a possible EC application in the future.

We want to be in a position where we have a complete application ready to go as soon as eligibility criteria have been satisfied. It is essential that we can submit a solid, well supported and defensible EC application at the appropriate time. Information which must be included, rainfall figures, wind patterns, stocking rates, grain purchases, evaporation rates, photographic evidence gathered over a period of time, to name just a few.

Any EC Application to the Federal Government must be accompanied by a recommendation from the State Minister that the criteria to support the application have been met. To assist in the general preparation of an application a high level representative from the Federal Government who is responsible for EC programs has been invited to visit Tasmania, possibly as early as January, to gain a first-hand understanding of the severe conditions facing producers. Farming, by its very nature, can be an isolated business and we want to make sure people know where they can turn for help. The following are useful contacts so I urge you to cut this article out and stick it on your 'fridge.

Roger Swain, TFGA President



## Farmers Experiencing Difficulties are urged to contact the following organisations

### **Rural Financial Counselling Service (Tas)**

The Service provides 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.

*\*Small Rural Business means a rural business that employs no more than 10 full-time-equivalent(38hrs per week) employees and provides the majority of its services to primary producers and is directly involved in primary production, eg fencing, harvesting, spraying or stock management contractor.*

Rural financial counselling is :

**Independent** of financial institutions, welfare agencies and government;

**Empowers** the client to make the decision right for their family and enterprise;

**Refers** clients to Centrelink and other professionals for succession planning, family mediation and personal counselling, emotional and social counselling.

**South** : Leigh Noye – 6272 5992

Email : [Hobart@rfcstasmania.com.au](mailto:Hobart@rfcstasmania.com.au)

**North** : Clemencia Barnes – 6334 8768

Email : [launceston@rfcstasmania.com.au](mailto:launceston@rfcstasmania.com.au)

### **Bureau of Meteorology**

The Bureau provides free information on weather predictions up to 7 days ahead and extracts and summaries from the national climate archives. In addition, there is information on climate outlooks, information on climate change and drought. See [www.bom.gov.au/wat/](http://www.bom.gov.au/wat/) or contact the Bureau's Tasmanian Climate Services Centre on 6221 2043.

### **Relationships Australia**

Relationships Australia (Tas), phone 1300 364 277 and you will be directed to the nearest office in your area. Relationship support services include relationship counselling, family mediation service, break even gambling counselling, step-families family integration service, children's contact service, contact orders program, services for youth, men and family services. Contact 1300 364 277, [www.relationships.com.au](http://www.relationships.com.au)

### **Mensline Australia**

Mensline Australia supports men who are dealing with family and relationship difficulties, particularly surrounding family break-down or separation. Mensline Australia telephone counsellors are professionally trained to provide confidential, professional and non-judgmental short-term counselling, direct telephone linkage to local services if required, relevant information and referrals to services and support programs in your area, relationship coaching and practical strategies for managing difficult situations. Contact 1300 789 978, [www.menslineaus.org.au/cms/index.html](http://www.menslineaus.org.au/cms/index.html).

### **Life Link Samaritans**

The Life Link Samaritans offer a 24-hour free, confidential Statewide telephone befriending service, which includes phone befriending service, face-to-face befriending, community training in suicide awareness, training in active listening, support for all involved following a suicide and/or suicide attempt. Contact 1300 364 566. Email: [lifelinksam@intas.net.au](mailto:lifelinksam@intas.net.au)

### **Centrelink – 'Giving you Options'**

Farm Help supports low-income farmers who cannot access further finance and who need assistance to make decisions about improving their farm business. Phone 1800 050 585.

#### **Contact :**

Farm Help	1800 050 585
Parenting payments, Family Assistance	13 61 50
Youth Allowance, Austudy	13 24 90
Assistance for isolated Children	13 23 18

### **Department of Economic Development**

The Department's Business Point can help you with questions about your business, marketing, licences, accessing government programs and much more. Contact Business Point on 1800 440 026.

### **CWA**

Applications from eligible individuals or communities can be made for funds. The criteria and application forms can be found on the CWA web site [www.cwaintas.org.au](http://www.cwaintas.org.au). Contact the State Office on 6231 3706, however it will be closed between 21 December 2006 and will re-open on 8 January 2007.