



Communities across Farrer will have greater access to financial support during the drought, with an additional assistance package worth nearly \$100 million announced by the Commonwealth Government.

Local MP Sussan Ley said \$33.4 million has been made available from the Drought Community Support Initiative to provide immediate financial assistance to eligible households in hardship.

“Farming households can receive up to \$3,000 to spend in their local community for urgent bills such as petrol, utilities or food. This takes some of the stress from families and helps boost the local economy.

“The effects of drought are not just felt on the farm, with many rural communities and businesses suffering a downturn as people spend less in town.

“We are working with the Salvation Army and St Vincent de Paul Society to make sure this money hits the ground quickly and gets to those most in need.

“Today the Prime Minister also announced additional funding for the Drought Communities Programme (DCP), which will deliver an extra \$1 million in support to Murray River Council to deliver local infrastructure and drought-relief projects.

Eleven councils in Farrer are now receiving this assistance; including Balranald, Berrigan, Carrathool, Edward River, Federation, Hay, Leeton, Murray River, Murrumbidgee, Narrandera and Wentworth Shire.

“The government is also simplifying Farm Household Allowance applications, with changes to remove business income reconciliation, change the time limit on payment to four years in every ten, simplify the assets test and recognise agistment.

“We’ve also increased funding for the Rural Financial Counselling Service

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which is experiencing increased demand. It's really important those in need of support do not self-assess their eligibility and seek advice from an expert, like a rural financial counsellor", Ms Ley said.

For more information and to apply for assistance visit <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought> or call 1800 900 090.



**There's immediate support available for individuals, families and communities doing it tough:**

The Liberal-National Government is standing by farmers, their families and communities across Farrer who continue to struggle with drought conditions. We recognise this drought is tough, and we have responded with direct and immediate support to help the whole community.

The Drought Community Support Initiative will provide immediate financial assistance of up to \$3000 to eligible households experiencing hardship. This can be used to cover bills such as food, petrol and utilities while helping local businesses with customers through their doors.

We will work with the Salvation Army and St Vincent de Paul Society to make sure this money hits the ground quickly and gets to those most in need.

The effects of the drought are not just felt on the farm – regional communities and businesses suffer as people spend less in town. Another 13 councils will be eligible for up to \$1 million for local infrastructure and drought-relief projects under the Drought Communities Program Extension

This will boost our local economy, create jobs and engage local businesses and suppliers while providing long-lasting benefit to communities and the rural industries they depend on.

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Farm Household Allowance applications have also been simplified. The changes will remove business income reconciliation, change the time limit on payment to four years in every ten, simplify the assets test, and recognise agistment.

The changes will make FHA easier to access and better reflect the nature of farming by acknowledging that farmers may experience more than one period of hardship in their lifetime.

The Coalition government has also injected \$740,000 into five Rural Financial Counselling Service providers who are experiencing pressure from increased demand.

The Morrison-McCormack Government continues to build on a drought response worth more than \$7 billion, helping farmers, families and communities.

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