



17 January 2020

Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

## Supporting drought affected Tasmanian communities

The Tasmanian majority Liberal Government is committed to supporting our farming and rural communities affected by severe dry conditions and bushfires.

We recently extended the Rural Relief Fund by \$150,000 and today we welcome an extremely generous donation of \$25,000 to the Fund by the Country Women's Association.

In times of need Tasmanians have a proud reputation of supporting their local communities and the CWA donation is a great example of helping your mates.

The CWA donation was made today at the Forum of Rural Stakeholders meeting in Launceston where about 20 organisations met to discuss priority issues, including the impact of drought and bushfires.

The extension to the Rural Relief Fund is part of the Tasmanian Government's recently announced \$400,000 Drought Support Package. It will be administered by Rural Business Tasmania, a not-for-profit association offering financial counselling and business support expertise to rural and regional communities.

The grants are available to assist those in hardship with direct household expenses such as food and utility bills through to farm business expenses such as repairing damaged fences.

Grants of up to \$1500 will provide immediate help and a further \$5000 may be available upon completion of an Action Plan, developed with support from a financial specialist who understands farm business, to help build resilience and plan for long-term success.

The Tasmanian Government is also aware that some farming families may be impacted by the recent bushfires. The Rural Relief Fund is also available for those impacted.

Other initiatives to support communities affected by severe dry conditions under the Drought Support Package include:

- \$20,000 for the TFGA to deliver drought community support events and upgrade the Tasmanian Feed and Fodder Register, TasFodder, to include agistment;
- \$80,000 for Rural Alive and Well to extend its outreach services;
- \$150,000 through the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture to assist farmers with in-drought management strategies;
- Weed management support through the \$5 million Tasmanian Weed Action Fund; and
- Workshops and practical support with on-farm and catchment-wide water management strategies through DPIPW.

The government will continue to monitor seasonal conditions in consultation with farmers and stakeholders and will consider additional assistance if required.

Information about the Rural Relief Fund including eligibility criteria and application and assessment processes are available at [www.ruralbusiness Tasmania.org.au/](http://www.ruralbusiness Tasmania.org.au/)

Farmers seeking information about drought and bushfires can also contact an Agrigrowth liaison officer on 1300 292292 or go to [fampoint.tas.gov.au](http://fampoint.tas.gov.au)