



## Foundation announces funding for rural financial counsellors in drought-affected areas

The Financial Counselling Foundation is pleased to announce it is funding rural financial counselling services in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, states that have been particularly hard hit by the long-running drought.

The funds come from a \$500,000 donation from ANZ, with an additional \$20,000 from the Foundation.

The funding will enable the Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) providers that receive their base funding from the Commonwealth Government to

extend their services to small businesses doing it tough because of the drought. The small business support positions will be based in the townships of Roma and Longreach in Queensland, Cooma and Dubbo in New South Wales, and Bairnsdale in Victoria.

This fills a real need in these communities as many small businesses in the towns of drought-affected areas are suffering financial hardship, and there is little or no support available. When farm families are doing it tough they have less money to spend and this really affects the local economy.

In making these grants, the Foundation worked closely with the Rural Financial Counselling Network. The Network's Chair, Geoff Fader, said that "these grants will make a real difference. They will mean that the recipient services across QLD, NSW and VIC will be able to help a much broader part of the community."

The Chair of the Financial Counselling Foundation, George Brouwer, said that "the grants reflect the Foundation's funding principles of identifying clear needs or gaps in funding for financial counselling. There is little or no funding for small businesses that need financial counselling support."

Michelle Commandeur, head of financial inclusion at ANZ, said "the drought is having a significant impact on families and communities across Australia, and their livelihoods. In supporting the Financial Counselling Foundation, we know small businesses experiencing hardship in these communities will also receive the financial counselling support they need."

### Further comments:

- Geoff Fader, Chair, Rural Financial Counselling Network, 0418 120 642

### Funded services

- Cooma: David Galloway, Rural Financial Counselling Service NSW Southern Region Inc, 02 6452 5850 or 0407 238 175
- Dubbo: Jeff Caldbeck, CEO, Rural Sector Support Incorporated, 1800 940 404 or 0437 994 409
- Roma: Jenny Whip, CEO, Rural Solutions Queensland Inc, 07 4622 5500
- Longreach: David Arnold, CEO, Central Western Qld Remote Area Planning and Development Board, 07 4845 4848 or 0428 583 301
- Bairnsdale: Kylie Holmes, Executive Officer, Rural Financial Counselling Service Victoria – Gippsland, 1300 045 747 or 0409 163 189