



David Littleproud MP

Federal Member for Maranoa

Media Statement

19 June 2018

Improving drought support for Maranoa farmers

- **Farm Household Support Amendment Bill 2018 introduced to Parliament**
- **The Bill will increase cumulative period farmers qualify for Farm Household allowance from three to four years**

Farmers doing it tough across Maranoa will benefit from the Coalition Government's decision to extend the Farm Household Allowance (FHA) from three to four years.

Member for Maranoa David Littleproud MP said he welcomed the changes which will give farmers more time to get on their feet.

"Farmers said extending FHA was a sensible measure which would help them, and we listened," David Littleproud said.

"This extra time will give them more breathing space to implement plans to become financially self-sufficient so they are in a better position to sustain their farming businesses.

"I need to stress that farmers should not self-assess whether they're eligible for FHA – I fear many eligible families across Maranoa have not applied.

"The Minister for Agriculture will hold a drought roundtable in coming weeks with key farming stakeholders, including the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) and state farming groups."

More announcements are likely in coming weeks.

The Coalition Government already provides a range of support measures to assist farming families in hardship. These include FHA, the Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) and Drought Assistance Concessional Loans.

The Coalition Government also recently boosted funding of the Rural Financial Counselling Service to more than \$70 million from 1 April 2016 to 30 June 2020. This will make sure the program keeps up with demand and will help farming communities to generate their own wealth and build strong, healthy livelihoods.

For more information on the support available for farmers, visit: <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/assistance/sup-farmers-rural-communities-drought>.

Fast Facts:

- **Since FHA was launched in July 2014 it has helped more than 7,900 people at a cost of more than \$230 million**
- **More than \$834 million in concessional loans have been approved to 1,527 farm businesses and the RFCS assists around 4,500 people each year.**
- **More than 80 per cent of those farmers surveyed about the FHA have said they are satisfied with the structure and assistance it provides.**
- **It is important farmers do not self-assess, Please seek advice from the Department of Human Services Farmer Assistance Hotline on 13 23 16.**

- The Coalition Government has boosted its funding commitment to the RFCS program to more than \$70 million from 1 April 2016 to 30 June 2020.
- Through the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper, the Coalition Government has provided:
 - The Farm Business Concessional Loans Scheme,
 - Farm Household Allowance,
 - The Rural Financial Counselling Service, and
 - Support to manage the effects of pest animals and weeds in drought-affected areas.
- The Coalition Government's concessional loan programs have provided more than \$834 million in loans to 1,527 farm businesses.
- The government will continue to support Australian farmers through the Regional Investment Corporation, which will deliver a nationally-consistent loans program
- The RFCS assists around 4,500 clients each year, with around 3,000 clients receiving assistance at any one time.
- The Coalition Government has delivered \$20.4 million to extend RFCS provider contracts to 30 June 2020

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