

Supporting Information – Centrelink – mobile services

Media release: *\$11 million to improve services for Australians affected by drought*

Why is this important?

- It will improve existing services by responding to the increased demand in drought affected areas for access to information about Australian Government services and assistance.
- The mobile services will enable faster referrals to services, and deliver targeted services to customers in areas where flexible service delivery is more appropriate. The initiative will provide an additional seven specialist Centrelink Rural Service Officers.
- It will reduce the sense of isolation that many people in rural and remote areas worst affected by the drought are experiencing.
- This networked, coordinated service to rural Australia enables a number of Australian Government initiatives to be accessed from one place and can provide referrals to other (state and local) initiatives.

Who will benefit?

- Rural and remote communities.
- Communities without access to a Centrelink Customer Service Centre.

What funding is the Government committing to the initiative?

- \$11 million over three years (including 2006-07).

What have we done in the past?

- On 6 November 2006, Centrelink commenced operating the Australian Government Drought Assistance Mobile Service.
- The implementation of this service combined with a low cost communication campaign has contributed to a significant increase in access by farmers eligible for Australian Government assistance through the Exceptional Circumstances Relief Payment (more than 4,000 farmers have accessed the services across 105 locations).
- It has proven to be an effective way of providing targeted services to drought-affected Australia.

When will the initiative conclude?

- Termination date of 30 June 2009.