

## Regional employment strategy to support farmers and local communities

The impacts of the current drought that is gripping much of Australia have been evident for some time, though as the rain continues to elude the areas that need it most those impacts are becoming far more broad reaching.

Local employment service, Job Centre Australia (JCAL) see the flow on effects that the lack of rain can have on employment, in the communities in which they operate. "From Dubbo, Wellington, Orange, Cowra to Young, we are seeing our farmers and agri-businesses doing it very tough", said JCAL Operations Manager, Terri- Lee Leach. We have had long term employed clients who have recently had their hours decreased or even cut all together due to the business owners struggling as economic downturn takes hold." Without work, we start to see the domino effect on the community. Less people spending their money in our local stores and on services. With limited finances, loss of routine and a seemingly dry outlook, people's mental health becomes an increasing concern.

"The mental health of our farmers and local communities doing it tough can take a real beating in times like this. Our service offers support to people with mental health concerns, as well as health conditions, injuries and disabilities, though we wanted to see how we could help further."

To ease the burden on people living in drought affected regional and rural communities, JCAL has introduced a mobile service centre which is available to visit outlying regions to provide support where people may have lost their job, be at risk of losing their job, or have been unemployed for some time.

"Each week, we visit the remote towns surrounding Dubbo and Wellington and we'd like to offer our assistance to people whether they're linked to our service or not. So, if you're in need of an ear, advice or practical support to find employment, career advice, identifying a new career path, or linking in with mental health or allied health professionals, we are committed to providing that to you."

" 'Communities where all people can achieve their potential' is JCAL's vision and this show of support in Dubbo is one way we can contribute and give back to the people who need it most."

Along with the extension of their services to local farmers and communities, internally, JCAL's staff have proven their personal commitment and support to seeing our farmers succeed. With an internal staff giving program now setup, the organisation has had over overwhelming commitment from staff within days of launching, from it's 200 staff. JCAL has committed to matching the donations which will be donated the Buy a Bale fundraising campaign.

To find out where the Job Centre Australia mobile service centre will be, or to speak with one JCAL's consultants, call 02 6800 1950.



**Pictured Left:** Job Centre Australia's Mobile Service Centre

**Pictured Right:** Job Centre Australia's Operations Manager Terri-Lee Leach (Centre) with the team from Wellington's Information and Neighbourhood Centre, donating a gift card to purchase personal hygiene packs.

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Job Centre Australia is a proud 'for-purpose' community-based organisation who put 100% of their profits back into supporting local people and communities. They specialise in empowering people with a disability, illness, injury or health condition to improve their circumstances through a range of training, support and employment opportunities. Operating since 1990 they've built a strong reputation for quality service. With decades of experience and local knowledge, they're dedicated to finding the right jobs for jobseekers and the right staff for businesses.