



MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP

Member for Hammond

Wednesday December 13, 2006

Interim EC declared for Murray Mallee and Upper South East

Following an announcement by the Federal Minister for Agriculture Peter McGuaran farmers and rural business-people in the Murray Mallee and Upper South East regions can now apply for interim assistance.

A 'prima facie' case has been established pending a full assessment and final determination, which is expected to follow shortly.

Under the interim arrangement, drought affected farmers and small business-people in the area can apply to Centrelink for interim income support for up to six months.

State Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick, a member of the Murraylands Drought Response Group who initiated this Exceptional Circumstances (EC) application, said Tuesday's tour of the region with National Rural Advisory Council personnel was an 'eye-opener'.

Mr Pederick said those wishing to apply for assistance should contact Centrelink to establish what assistance might be available to them and begin the application process.

Centrelink's Rural Services Officer Krys Baker said people could call in to their nearest Centrelink office or phone them on 13 23 16 to discuss their eligibility. Further information is available through Centrelink's website, www.centrelink.gov.au

Application forms could also be viewed and downloaded at this site by clicking on the following links from the home page;

- 'drought bus' icon (top right)
- scroll down to 'EC Relief Payment'
- scroll down to 'EC Relief Payment Claim Forms'
- scroll down to 'Claim for Drought Assistance Form' or
- 'Abridged Claim for Drought Assistance Form' (for those who received assistance previously).

Ms Baker said those wishing to have these application forms (which can be used for interim applications) mailed to them should contact her on 8535 7043 or Robert Holtham on 8643 0797. Other information is available on Service SA website at www.service.sa.gov.au/drought.asp

Small businesses deriving at least 70 percent of their income from agriculture can also apply for interim assistance.

Ms Baker said other emergency assistance was available through the CWA, who could assist drought affected families in rural communities with up to \$2,000 per household for food and bills support. The CWA contact number is 8332 4166.

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