



MEDIA RELEASE

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A hand of hope in times of disaster – Vinnies volunteers easing drought burden

For Charleville's Allison Moffatt, her work as a Vincentian (Vinnies member), means she provides her fellow Queenslanders suffering through the ongoing drought some financial relief – but just as importantly – she also gives hope.

Vinnies has distributed \$76,000 to people affected by drought and bushfire since October through its Always There - Vinnies QLD Disaster Appeal, but as the rain continues to stay away from more than 67 per cent of the state, calls for help are only growing.

Vinnies members are a shoulder to lean on as dams stay bone dry and dead grass crunches under feet, offering more than just financial help but a friendly and compassionate ear.

“A lot of the farmers have had to put people off because they just can't afford to keep them,” Allison said.

“We are helping a lot of farm workers and contractors, cooks, roustabouts, kangaroo shooters and those types of roles.

“So many of them haven't had any work for a while, as the number of sheep on properties has dropped dramatically because of drought, wild dogs and other factors.

“We have helped quite a few who have received some government funding but need extra help because of illnesses and those types of things that cause financial problems for them,” Allison said.

“They are always most appreciative because with ill-health they've got to travel huge distances for appointments, all that is an added expense for them.

“If we can pay a bill for a farmer or contractor out of our fund - that has a two-fold effect because it helps the farmer as well as the local business community to keep going as well.

“To know that someone is there that can help them a bit means a lot to them. Someone to talk to or to visit them is a real relief to people.

“Sometimes they are at the point where they just don't know where to turn next.”

Though they can't make it rain, Allison said the assistance Vinnies provides helps people to keep fighting until the day the heavens open again.

“We've just been trying to help wherever we can - whether it's drought assistance or through our normal emergency assistance, just doing what we can for people,” she said.

“When you can help the farmers, it is a big relief for them and their families, because they have no income, most of them have just about sold or lost all their stock completely now and they are just trying to keep a few stock alive to kick off again when it does rain.

“Every day we just do what we can to help people cope. We are helping with rent, food, bill, insurances and more.

“It’s been years since we’ve had any proper rain, it’s becoming a really hard battle at the moment, mentally and physically for people.

“It is really taking its toll. They certainly do need help, that’s for sure.”

Donations to help Queenslanders affected by the devastating drought can be made via <https://donate.vinnies.org.au/appeals-qld/vinnies-disaster-appeal-qld>

ENDS.

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A photo is attached below of Allison Moffatt (left) and fellow Charleville Vinnies member Toni Delforce.



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