



MEDIA RELEASE

Vinnies welcomes drought payment extension to 31 December 2020

24 June 2020

The St Vincent de Paul Society has welcomed news today that the Australian Government extended its *Drought Community Support Initiative Round 2* until 31 December 2020.

National Council CEO Toby oConnor urged farming communities still impacted by the drought to apply for the payment of up to \$3,000 per household.

Mr oConnor said Vinnies and The Salvation Army were helping administer the funding for farmers, farm workers and farm suppliers in eligible, drought declared local government areas.

‘The Society is committed to ensuring as many eligible households as possible receive this important payment,’ Mr oConnor said.

‘We have already assisted over 9,000 households, yet we know from our local contacts there are still many potential recipients who we haven’t reached and we want to ensure they have a chance to access the support under this extended round,’ he said

Many areas became newly eligible in March 2020, including in the Clarence Valley, Junee and Kempsey in NSW; the Central Desert in the Northern Territory; Bundaberg in Qld; the Barossa in SA; Benalla and Wangaratta in Vic.

The following LGAs in Western Australia also qualify: Albany, Bridgetown-Greenbushes; Broomhill-Tambellup, Brucerock, Cranbrook, Denmark, Donnybrook-Balingup, Esperance, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup, Katanning, Kent, Kojonup, Nannup, Narembeen, Plantagenet and Ravensthorpe.

‘A \$3,000 payment can provide significant help with household expenses and day to day items,’ Mr oConnor said.

‘We also welcome the Federal Government’s simplification of the *Farm Household Allowance*. Vinnies is only too aware of the numbers of individuals and communities still doing it tough because of the drought,’ he said.

Broken Hill farmer Sonja O’Connor said she used the payment to help buy groceries and pay bills: ‘I was really grateful for that. Overwhelmed, actually, because I was in a pretty bad spot,’ she said.

Vinnies is strongly encouraging farmers, farm workers and suppliers to apply online www.vinnies.org.au/drought or call the St Vincent de Paul drought helpline on 1300 846 643.

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia consists of 60,000 members and volunteers who operate on the ground through over 1,000 conferences located in individual parishes across the country.

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