



Boost to RFCS funding during the bushfire and drought crisis



The Australian Government stands by our bushfire-affected primary producers with additional measures to support recovery from this season's fires.

The path to recovery over the next two years will include 60 more rural financial counsellors and support workers, with an injection of \$15 million in additional funding to the Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS).

The additional funding will maintain the existing service level and support increased demand expected due to the bushfires.

Rural financial counselling can help our primary producers during this crisis

Rural financial counsellors play a vital role in our regional areas. Not only are RFCS staff well-qualified and trusted to do this work, but as part of these communities they have also seen the impact of bushfires up-close.

Early assistance from the RFCS will be critical to help primary producers apply for support payments, recovery grants, complete insurance claims and get in touch with the right people for broader services.

It can be difficult to properly assess what it may take to recover. RFCS will also provide longer-term financial counselling to help primary producers better understand their financial position and make decisions in response to bushfires and ongoing drought conditions.

Key points

- The Australian Government is providing \$15 million in additional funding to the RFCS for 60 new rural financial counsellors and support workers.
- The RFCS provides free financial counselling to farmers, foresters, fishers and related small businesses who are facing financial hardship.
- Early assistance is critical in helping primary producers access immediate assistance.
- Longer term financial counselling will help primary producers through the difficult financial decisions on the path to recovery.



Additional counsellors to provide essential services

Existing rural financial counsellors and support workers are already on the ground working with communities and assessing needs.

The Australian Government is committed to getting the right support to the places it's most needed. The additional funding will allow service providers to get counsellors and support workers into affected communities quickly to provide immediate assistance. The additional funding has been provided for the next two years to assist with the long-term recovery efforts.

Rural financial counsellors can help people understand their financial position and help develop and implement plans to improve their financial situation.

Rural financial counsellors can also:

- identify financial and business options
- negotiate with lenders
- identify other assistance schemes
- apply for Farm Household Allowance and other support payments.

Rural financial counsellors do not give family, emotional or social counselling or financial advice, but can make referrals to other professional services, including accountants, agricultural advisors, education, or mental health services.

Contacting the RFCS

When individuals are ready, those needing assistance can contact their nearest RFCS office by calling **1800 686 175**.



Phone
1800 686 175



awe.gov.au/rfcs