



MEDIA RELEASE

Rural Financial Counselling Service Gippsland 2016-2017 Annual Report

Rural Financial Counselling Service Victoria - Gippsland (RFCSV-G) has released their latest Annual Report detailing its performance for the 2016-2017 financial year, highlighting an increase in client satisfaction levels, along with increased funding and support from Federal and State Governments to specifically support the dairy industry (68% of RFCSV-G clients) impacted by seasonal and market conditions.

RFCSV-G is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Victorian State Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources to provide support to farming communities and small rural businesses at risk of financial hardship through free, confidential and independent assistance, referrals and access to government programs, and support services.

Outgoing Chair, Richard Habgood stated, “Despite the challenges of the new reporting requirements and dealing with the impacts of the dairy crisis during the year, our staff continued to do what they do best – support farmers in financial difficulty. I thank all staff for their ongoing dedication to our service and our clients over the last 12 months.

The Board and management acknowledges the generous support provided by the Commonwealth and State funding bodies for the 2016-17 financial year. In addition, we would like to thank Michael Lorenz from our local IGA (Leongatha) and Graeme Cockerell, Chairman of the Lions Humanitarian Disaster Relief and Coordinator of ‘Need for Feed’, for provision of emergency funding, support and food hampers throughout the year.”

During 2016-2017, RFCSV-G:

- Retirement of Executive Officer (EO), Peter Jennings with appointment of new EO, Kylie Holmes.
- Reported a net surplus in available funding due to increase in Government support (compared to a loss in previous year) allowing the extension of employment contracts for counselling services.
- Experienced record number of clients seeking assistance.
- Recruited two (2) additional Financial Counsellors.
- Expanded services to support non-farming Small Rural Businesses (12 month contract).
- Increased reporting of Key Performance Indicators monitored by Federal and State funding bodies working to improve sustainability of the agricultural industry.
- Achieved all compliance reporting and milestones required for funding deeds.
- Rebranded its corporate image.
- Increased community engagement and awareness activities, and implemented campaigns targeted at farmer health, wellbeing and future planning.

A copy of their Annual Report 2016-17 can be accessed via their website at www.ruralfinancialcounselling.org.au/publications/annual-reports

Interested farmers seeking support are encouraged to contact RFCSV-G on 5662 2566.

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