

21 January 2008

\$450 000 FUNDS FOR WESTERN CATCHMENT LANDHOLDERS' DROUGHT PREPARATION

Western Catchment landholders are being urged to take part in the new 'Prepare for the Next Drought' Incentives Program and ensure the future of their land and business.

Eight inland Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs), including the Western CMA, are participating in this drought management project in partnership with the Department of Primary Industries (DPI).

The \$450,000 program includes training for at least 45 landholders, the development of a 'Drought Action Plan' for each participating property and incentive funding of up to \$10 000 for on-ground works.

The training component includes a free, one-day compulsory 'Stockplan' training course and one of three specialised Department of Primary Industries courses designed to assist producers to develop a drought plan and limit financial losses during drought.

Once the training is complete, landholders are eligible to apply for up to \$10,000 for on-ground works to better prepare for future drought. Eligible on-ground improvements may include fencing off seed-source areas or planting species such as saltbush, bluebush or Mitchell grass, improving water supply infrastructure such as refurbishing derelict Great Artesian Basin bores; or establishing drought feeding areas.

Stockplan training will be held in Broken Hill on January 30, Cobar on February 1, Nyngan on February 5 and Walgett on February 7. Applications for on-ground works will be accepted until April 30 and all works must be completed by October 1. For more information contact the Western CMA on 1800 032 101 or visit www.western.cma.nsw.gov.au

Financial assistance is offered to landholders needing to travel long distances to participate. Individual circumstances should be discussed with CMA staff on 1800 032 101.

Chair of the Western CMA, Rory Treweeke, says the program provides an excellent opportunity for landholders.

"It's been a tough time for landholders in the Western Catchment, and this program will assist them to learn from their past experiences and to prepare for the future" Mr Treweeke said.

"CSIRO studies have proven that variability in weather is likely to increase with an overall drying tendency over the next twenty to fifty years, coupled with an increase in average temperatures," he said.

"The Western Catchment is a naturally dry area, so drought is inevitable. This program allows landholders to be better equipped to prepare and handle the next one", Mr Treweeke said.



MEDIA RELEASE



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For further information:

Maree Barnes, PR and Media Officer CMA. Ph: 02 6883 3058/0427 256814

Rory Treweeke, Chair Western CMA. Ph: 02 6829 0301/0428 634204

Caption: "Shutting the gate on everything", photographed by Sue Currey of Walgett 2005.

