

OVERVIEW
ROTARY DISTRICT 9630 DROUGHT RELIEF
JUNE, 2018

The Rotary District 9630 Drought Appeal has been delivering aid to Drought affected Communities since late 2013 early 2014 using our “Whole of Community” approach.

This aid is broken down to 3 main areas:-

1. Voucher System
2. Family days
3. Rotary Reading Assistance Programme

The appeal has raised in excess of \$950,000 so far. Further donations are sought to continue the good work within the Drought Communities.

The relief effort continues with over \$800,000 in aid distributed by the District 9630 Appeal Fund amongst the Rotary Clubs of Roma, Mitchell, St George and Charleville.

The main thrust is by using ‘Third Parties’ to identify recipients through their files and networks. This takes the onus off individual Rotarians and/or the Clubs to personally identify people in need adding a level of anonymity and more importantly governance. Funds raised have and will be used in the provision of immediate aid to Drought affected Landholders and their Communities.

WHOLE OF COMMUNITY

The relief effort is designed to assist not only the farmers/graziers severely drought affected but to also to provide relief to the small local communities. An early decision was made to avoid getting involved in “stuff”. Reason being that the local businesses receive very little if any benefit, in fact, “stuff” can be seen as detrimental to them as the goods are brought in and not purchased locally. These small businesses are also suffering and many or most are carrying debt with little or no support. This ties in with our ethos of doing what we can for the Whole of Community.

Clubs are working within the local communities with and/or supporting other aid agencies where possible to deliver relief.

Third Party involvement is supplied mainly by the Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS), but also includes Charleville Neighbourhood Centre, RFDS Charleville, State Member for Warrego Ann Leahy MLA.

The RFCS Counsellors are front line and are able to identify potential recipients through their files and day to day contact with the rural property owners. Aid is distributed to owner operated properties as against Company and Foreign owned properties

VOUCHER SYSTEM

Rotary District 9630 developed the now known “Voucher System” for the delivery of aid to the Drought Affected Rural Property owners. The system works as follows: -

1. Third Party eg RFCS etc identifies needy recipient through files or questionnaires.
2. Rotary Club provides numbered vouchers to be forwarded to the recipient by the Third Party drawn on the recipient’s Local businesses.
3. Recipient then attends the Local business and makes purchases to the value of the Voucher.
4. Business then sends request for payment stating the number only of the voucher to the local Rotary Club .
5. Rotary Club draws cheque or direct credit and forwards to the Business. (Cash in the Bank!).

It has been said that mathematically these funds will wash within the small community some 5 to 7 times before leaching out.

Many testimonials received from Property owners and Local Businesses praising this initiative and support to their local communities. If a business is forced to leave these small country communities, it is highly unlikely that they will return. Flow on effects could be that the business leaves, taking their children out of the school which may leave the school vulnerable to a reduction in teacher or even closure due to lack of numbers.

FAMILY DAYS

It was identified that there is a serious problem amongst the drought areas of suicide and mental health issues especially amongst the younger folk. In order to do something to help combat these issues Rotary Clubs have and continue to run intermittent “Family Days” where the small local area community can come together and share time in a relaxed and inviting environment at no cost to themselves.

ROTARY READING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (RRAP)

This is a programme developed where young children in the Drought affected areas are sent an age appropriate book each month, ‘address personalised’. At present there are 125 kiddies on the role.

Majority of books are donated and the postage costs met by the fund.

Anecdotal evidence has it that the kiddies wait eagerly each month for “THEIR” book.

This report is meant to be an overview of the District 9630 Drought Appeal and Relief Programme.

Yours in Rotary

Phillip Charles (Marlene)

Past District Governor

District Drought Committee Chair

Rotary District 9630

0413 026 994

phillip.charles@bigpond.com