



Media Release

For Release: 28 November 2002

ANZ rallies behind VFF drought relief effort

ANZ and the Victorian Farmers Federation today announced a partnership to provide support for the Victorian Farmers Federation Disaster Relief Fund, established to provide assistance to drought-affected farmers in northern Victoria.

ANZ will assist the Victorian Farmers Federation initiative regarding accessing donated hay stocks from southern-based Victorian farmers, for distribution to drought-affected farmers in northern Victoria by providing practical assistance, including:

- ANZ branches in Gippsland and South Western Victoria coordinating the collection of hay and fodder for hay drives
- Acceptance of 'hay pledges' at ANZ's branch network throughout Victoria from farmers wishing to donate hay and fodder to the hay drive
- Acceptance at ANZ's branch network throughout Victoria of cash donations from the public for the Victorian Farmers Federation Disaster Relief Fund
- A donation of \$10,000 to the Victorian Farmers Federation Disaster Relief Fund, to offset some of the costs incurred by the Victorian Farmers Federation to run the relief program.

ANZ Head of Rural Banking, Mr Mike Guerin, said the drought relief initiatives were a practical way for ANZ to support customers and the community in rural areas during a very difficult period.

"We know we've got some way to go to regain the respect of our customers and the community, but we're committed to weathering the highs and lows that come with running a rural financial banking business," said Mr Guerin.

"It is a tough time for Victorian farmers and so we're pleased our people and resources can play a role in supporting the Victorian Farmers Federation's drought relief efforts," he said.

The Victorian Farmers Federation President, Mr Paul Weller, said ANZ's support would help fund contractors to cut hay and sorghum at farms, roadsides and reserves and deliver it to needy farmers.

"We're coordinating a major effort to get as much hay as possible up to the north to keep livestock alive through the drought and ANZ's financial and in-kind support takes some pressure off, so we can focus on getting the job done," he said.

In addition to providing practical support to the Victorian Farmers Federation, ANZ, as part of its ongoing commitment to the farming community, will take all appropriate steps to assist affected customers to manage financially through this difficult period.

"We're committed to supporting our customers through difficult periods, and we would encourage them to visit their local ANZ representative to discuss their individual situation. We'll provide relief on a case-by-case basis," said Mr Guerin.

ANZ will work with the Victorian Farmers Federation for the next six weeks to support the Disaster Relief Fund. Customers can make a cash donation or 'hay pledge' by visiting any ANZ branch in Victoria. Cash donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

For media enquiries, contact:

Rita Zonius
Media Relations Manager, ANZ
Tel: 03-9273 6190 or 0409-655 551
Email: zoniusr@anz.com

Peter Carkeek
Victorian Farmers Federation
Tel: 03-92075608 or 0419-374 445
Email: pcarkeek@VFF.org.au