



NEWS RELEASE

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

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Drought deaths demand instant action

"Male farmers are taking their own lives at a rate of one every four days – this is an alarming statistic" said Dr Tony Hobbs, Chair of the Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP).

"Rural GPs like me are seeing more and more seriously depressed farmers and others from rural communities"

"ADGP agrees with *beyondblue* Chairman, Jeff Kennett that workable solutions to the growing issue of suicide and depression in Australia's drought stricken areas are urgently needed".

"There has been enough talk. It's time for action".

"With the drought forecast to become worse, we need practical solutions on the ground now if we are to save lives and help communities stay connected" said Dr Hobbs.

"Through *beyondblue* programs and the divisions network, we can quickly harness existing infrastructure, proven models of intervention and existing resources to deliver local solutions".

We can achieve this by:

- Increasing services in rural towns by employing a dedicated psychologist through well established division run access to psychological services to provide counselling, postvention support and provide outreach care;
- Build service and community capacity by rolling out Community Resilience Groups to help communities stay connected and respond to crises and critical events; and
- Offer Mental Health First Aid training to families, community leaders and non-clinical services in drought affected areas, and introduce innovative programs like 'pit stop' to take mental health information to rural people where they live and work, such as rural field days.

ADGP CEO Kate Carnell said this approach will make a significant difference as it addresses the fundamental issues facing rural Australian communities.

"ADGP and *beyondblue* call upon the Federal Government and the corporate sector to work with us to implement this plan".

For more information please call Kate Carnell, ADGP Chief Executive Officer, on 0415 662 266 or Dr Tony Hobbs, Chair ADGP 0429 424 423

WHAT IS ADGP?

- ADGP is the peak body representing 119 Divisions of General Practice and eight State-based organisations (SBOs) around Australia. The Divisions Network supports general practice and their practice teams and drives the implementation of innovative health strategies.
- ADGP, through the Divisions Network, works to integrate general practice with other sectors of the health system, both government and non-government, to deliver high quality care to the Australian community.
- ADGP is committed to promoting the health of all Australians by supporting the role of Divisions in the nation's primary health care system.



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