

## DROUGHT COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM (DCOP) Guidelines for remote distribution of \$500 vouchers

### PROPOSAL

The Rotary Clubs of Swan Hill are seeking the assistance of identified community members to assist their local primary producers, suppliers and workers to apply for Government funded \$500 debit cards to families that have been financially impacted by drought. This includes those currently in drought as well as those recovering from the intense drought of the past few years.

We are asking for your assistance to use your networks to identify 200 eligible families, verify their needs and willingness to accept the assistance and provide the required information to our clubs so that the cards can be directly delivered by registered post.

### BACKGROUND

On behalf of Rotary Australia World Community Service (RAWCS) we have entered into a partnership with the Commonwealth Government to assist in the delivery of the Drought Community Outreach Program [DCOP], an initiative of the National Recovery and Resilience Agency (NRRRA).

The DCOP has been designed to increase coordination of drought and drought recovery support and enhance community awareness of the Australian Government's drought assistance measures. There has been significant disruption to the program caused by COVID travel restrictions however, the program is focused on holding 110 information outreach events in selected towns, throughout the drought affected areas, for families directly impacted by drought. Events are attended by a range of Government and non-Government agencies providing information and support to assist families to deal with and recover from the crippling drought of the past few years.

### ROTARY'S ROLE IS TO

- Assist with the promotion and delivery of the community outreach events through community wellbeing activities and BBQ catering.
- Distribute \$500 debit cards at these events to eligible farming households that are experiencing financial hardship due to drought as direct support and to improve levels of economic activity in regions as these cards are spent in local communities and businesses. The Debit cards were also envisaged as an added incentive for families to attend the outreach events and thus become fully informed of the Government and non-Government support available to them.

For participating Rotary Clubs this represents a fully funded Community Service Project opportunity and to date 60 Rotary Clubs have been engaged across the nation.

In recognition of the delays and disruption to the national outreach event itinerary, caused by COVID, the Government contract currently permits Rotary to distribute 5,600 of the available 12,000 debit cards outside of the outreach events by direct contact with eligible recipients. Currently 2,000 debit cards remain available to distribute this way in drought affected areas where no outreach events have been held or have been planned.

### ELIGIBLE FAMILIES OR INDIVIDUALS

RAWCS will provide financial assistance in the form of \$500 debit cards to households who are facing hardship arising from the impact of drought (including during the recovery phase) in identified drought affected areas by Registered mail. Cards can be used in any EPTPOS facility in Australia, however, **cannot be used on the Internet.**

An eligible recipient must

- Be an Australian citizen or permanent resident who is 18 years of age or older;
- Be a farmer, farm worker, farm supplier or contractor;
- Live and/or work in an area that is identified as drought affected;
- Be in need of financial assistance to pay for household expenses such as food, petrol, utility bills, or another need, or is at imminent risk of not being able to pay for these goods and services.

Only one \$500 voucher will be provided per eligible farming household defined as;

- A person living alone or with other related or unrelated people who usually live in the same private dwelling and have financial dependencies;
- Individuals who are not related, are not financially dependent, and who live in a dwelling they rent/share e.g. shearing contractors who group share a house.

Three generations of the one family living in separate households on the same farm are each entitled to receive a \$500 debit card.

Recipients are still eligible to receive this support, even if they have previously received other forms of Commonwealth financial assistance such as the Drought Community Support Initiative [DCSI]. The \$500 is free of income tax and does not have to be declared in a recipient's tax return. There is no means test or other financial information required; acceptance of the card is sufficient evidence of financial hardship.

### **ROTARY DISTRICT DCOP CARD DISTRIBUTION PROCEDURE**

Experience has shown that many proud farming families are reluctant to request financial assistance often saying that others are worse off. Generally, when it is explained to them that by taking the offered assistance and spending it in their local community, they will be contributing to the financial turnover and thus reinforcing the recovery of local businesses and the community as a whole, they are more inclined to participate.

#### **The Application Form will require the following applicant information:**

- Farmer or Farm employee or Farm Contractor [tick box]
- Surname
- Given names
- Residential address
- Driver's License Number
- Date of birth
- Mobile or landline phone number
- Email address (if available)
- Property Identification Code [PIC] only required for Farmers
- Confirmation of Eligibility criteria
  - Australian Citizen or Permanent Resident over 18 years
  - Lives or works in drought declared area
  - Is in need of financial assistance to pay household expenses
  - Has not previously received a Rotary DCOP grant debit card
- Farm business name and address for farm employee, supplier or farm contractor applicants
- Name of the Rotarian certifying that the above details have been checked with the applicant by phone or in person.

Each eligible applicant completes the attached application form which will be checked and endorsed by the Presidents of the Swan Hill Rotary Clubs. The Clubs will check that the application is complete, legible, and signed by the applicant.

#### **Completed Application forms should be sent to:**

Email: Scan as a PDF and send to [swanhillrotary@gmail.com](mailto:swanhillrotary@gmail.com)

**OR**

Post: PO Box 656, Swan Hill 3585

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