"We Stand as One with Local Farmers - Dilly Drought Drive" Fundraising Appeal

Background

The entire State of NSW was gripped in one of the worst droughts on record in 2018. To raise funds for devastated rural community to purchase animal feeds and water which are of utmost importance to the farmers, ACCF launched “We Stand as One with Local Farmers – Dilly Drought Drive” fundraising appeal in September, and Wollondilly Shire was chosen as the beneficiary of this appeal as 100% of the area was in drought.

Wollondilly Shire is located on the south-western outskirts of Sydney at the foothills of the Southern Highlands and is surrounded by spectacular natural beauty and rural pastures. It’s 2,560 square kilometres stretch from Yanderra in the South, Appin and Menangle in the East, Warragamba in the North, and the Nattai wilderness, Yerranderie and Burragorang Valley to the West. (See map below)

Sharon Robertson, Founder and Coordinator of the Dilly Drought Drive, shares the extraordinary community effort in the following interview.

Please tell us a bit about Dilly Drought Drive (DDD).

“I started the DDD, when a few of my friends were really struggling with the drought locally, with months I had 25 farmers locally in the Wollondilly needing help. This was in January 2018. My friends Tia and Lynette came onboard to help me out and then later Gavin to help us buy hay.

In the first 2 weeks, I had Lions Club of Tahmoor auspice us. At present, we still have 21 farmers needing help. We are dropping over 100,000 liters of water to our farmers each week.”

In what way did ACCF’s support help you?

“The ACCF’s money bought 30 trucks up from Victoria, a total of 950 large bales, which supplied each farmer with 5-6 months’ worth of hay allocations. It has also helped us supply one months’ worth of water to farmers who need it, with the extra $10,000 ACCF sent to us.”

What impact did ACCF’s support have in your community?

“ACCF’s help couldn’t have come at a better time, as raising money in a small community is hard enough, but coming into Christmas and school holidays we knew it would be hard. ACCF has helped us get past those season comfortably and the farmers are very appreciative of the help. Without this help, we would not have been able to set up the farmers as well as we have to get through the upcoming winter season. It has relieved a lot of pressure off the farmers. It has also made our committees workload much lighter, not having to beg for money to help the local farmers.”

What kind of ongoing help do you need?

“At present, we need $8,000 a month to keep water up for the farmers. After winter we will also have to look into maybe buying more hay if we have the money to do so.

We are hoping we will get enough rain to help grow paddocks grass, to keep everyone going, but at present the forecast is not looking good. We do not get the rain like you do in Sydney, a lot of the time it actually misses this area. We are hoping to raise another $50,000 to get the farmers through the winter with water.”