

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Addressing the impact of drought on Indigenous communities

The impact of drought on the mental health of Indigenous Australians will be the focus of a forum being held tomorrow at the University of Newcastle's Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health (CRRMH).

The forum is part of the Drought Mental Health Assistance Package, a major NSW government initiative aimed at improving access to mental health services for people in drought affected communities.

Helping Indigenous communities, women and younger children, and older farmers are key priorities of the Package, which also aims to help stop the misuse of alcohol and other drugs in rural areas.

Director of the CRRMH, Professor Brian Kelly, said the forum would bring together many services at a time when people affected by the drought were doing it tough.

"This forum will be instrumental in bringing issues of Indigenous mental health to the fore. We will be developing ideas on how as a community we can work together and reduce the impact of drought on Indigenous communities."

The event has been organised in collaboration with many key services including Area Health Services, Aboriginal Medical Services, government and non-government indigenous organisations and community members.

**The forum will be held on Thursday 3 July from 10am – 4pm at the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health, Bloomfield Campus in Orange.**

**For comment: Professor Brian Kelly on 02 6360 7991.**