

# MEDIA RELEASE



Thursday, 5 December 2019

## 10 ways to support rural communities leading up to Christmas

The Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (RAMHP) team is encouraging Australians to support individuals and communities impacted by the ongoing drought and the bushfires leading up to Christmas.

RAMHP Manager Tessa Caton said this Christmas will be especially tough for many rural families.

“The bushfires and the ongoing drought has really taken a toll on many people financially, physically and mentally. There is a lot of stress and worry about what the future entails.

“On the positive side there is lot of great work happening across communities by individuals, volunteers, community groups and organisations. It is often the strength and spirit of our communities that gets them through difficult times.

“Our RAMHP team who live and work in rural communities often get asked by people ‘how can we help those who are doing it tough?’. That is why this year RAMHP have put together these suggestions on how to support people in rural communities leading up to Christmas,” said Tessa.

- **Make a donation** - a national not-for-profit –‘Givit’ helps to provide exactly what is needed in disaster response and recovery. Go to [www.givit.org.au](http://www.givit.org.au) to find out more
- **Support rural businesses** – get on social media and check the facebook page @buyfromthebush –this page provides a showcase of beautiful things to buy from rural communities facing drought -#buyfromthebush
- **Come out on a road trip and visit a regional area** – This facebook page - #Stayinthebush – provides a showcase of beautiful places to stay in the bush
- **Volunteer in your local community or in another community doing it tough** –this Christmas give volunteers a break and donate some time to a cause or organisation
- **Buy rural** - One Day Closer to Rain (Drought) –Rural Cottage Crafts- buy home-made crafts from rural Australians via this facebook page
- **Support our First Responders’ wellbeing** – [www.givenow.com.au/behindtheseen](http://www.givenow.com.au/behindtheseen) - this initiative supports postage costs and distribution of ‘Stress Less Packs’ to first responders across Australia
- **Give a gift of hope for Christmas** – provide support for farmers and their rural communities affected by drought -visit the facebook page Drought Angels- @droughtangels or visit [www.droughtangels.org.au](http://www.droughtangels.org.au)
- **Keep up with social connections** – now is time to spend time with family and friends. Arrange to have a cuppa with a neighbour or pick up the phone and check in with someone who you know who may be doing it tough



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- **Help raise awareness around the gaps in services and support for rural Australians struggling with Alcohol addiction** - Visit 'Sober In The Country' (SITC) at [www.soberinthecountry.com.au/](http://www.soberinthecountry.com.au/) to find out more
- **Make someone's day with a random act of kindness** – check [www.randomactofkindness.org](http://www.randomactofkindness.org) for ideas on how you can make a difference.

Please note that charities are asking people who want to help communities to donate money instead of food or clothing.

### Where to get help

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call **000** or go to your nearest hospital emergency department.

**Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (RAMHP)** – contact your local RAMHP Coordinator at [www.ramhp.com.au](http://www.ramhp.com.au). They are not clinicians but they can listen, provide support and help connect people to services in their local area.

If you're concerned about your own or someone else's mental health, call the **NSW Mental Health Line 1800 011 511** for advice or the Suicide Call Back Service on **1300 659 467**.

**Online resources** – Head to our website [www.ramhp.com.au/downloadable-resources/](http://www.ramhp.com.au/downloadable-resources/) for resources including podcasts, fact sheets, self -help quiz and our Glove Box Guide to Mental Health.

For best practice guidelines on reporting suicide and mental ill health, check the Mindframe Media guidelines on <https://mindframe.org.au/>

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