



# The Hon. David Littleproud MP

## Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources

### M E D I A R E L E A S E

24 August 2018

#### Changes to Farm Household Allowance through Parliament

- Legislation to amend the Farm Household Allowance passed through Parliament yesterday.
- Changes include lifting the net asset threshold from \$2.6 million to \$5 million and a supplement payment of up to \$12,000 to help meet basic daily expenses.
- This brings the total payment for a couple to around \$37,000 and to around \$22,000 for a single.

The Coalition Government yesterday passed legislation to amend the Farm Household Allowance to boost help farmers in drought.

Minister for Agriculture David Littleproud said the changes will deliver the \$12,000 FHA supplement from 1 September for couples and \$7,200 for singles.

This brings the total payment for a couple to around \$37,000 and to around \$22,000 for a single.

The changes will also lift the FHA net asset threshold cap from \$2.6 million to \$5 million from 1 September.

“We’re working full tilt get this support out the door as soon as possible,” Mr Littleproud said.

“The increase to the net asset threshold potentially means about 8,000 extra farmers will soon be eligible for the FHA. The Department of Agriculture estimates 27,000 farmers are potentially eligible for FHA and have not applied.

“Farmers should not guess at whether they’re eligible for FHA. They should see a Rural Financial Counsellor.

“We recently announced an extra \$5 million for the Rural Financial Counselling Service to support increased demand so please get advice from the free service.

“Farmers already on FHA will not have to apply for the extra payments - it will be paid automatically. The threshold changes will stay in place to 30 June 2019, with the review of FHA due in early 2019.

“Importantly, if you qualify under these new arrangements and your circumstances do not change, you can stay on payment after 30 June, even if the asset limit decreases.

“I ask that farmers bear with us while the Department of Human Services implements the necessary changes to give effect to the threshold changes, which I expect to be completed by 1 October this year.”

The changes build on the Coalition Government’s extension of FHA from three to four cumulative years.

For eligibility please seek advice from the free Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) on 1800 686 175 or the Department of Human Services Farmer Assistance Hotline on 13 23 16.

For more information, visit <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/assistance>

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**Fast facts**

- The Coalition Government has announced additional support for farmers facing drought totalling more than \$1.8 billion.
- Since FHA was launched in July 2014 it has helped more than 8,000 people at a cost of more than \$230 million.
- FHA provides a fortnightly payment to help farming families in tough times. Each member of a couple can receive around \$12,800 a year, and single people can receive up to \$15,350. In addition to the fortnightly payment recipients can access up to \$1,500 for an independent financial assessment of their business, and up to \$4,000 in activity supplements to assist with improving their circumstances and financial self-reliance.