

# Guy Barnett MP

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Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

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Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

## Providing resilience funding to farmers and agricultural producers

The Tasmanian Liberal Government is delivering a commitment of \$400,000 over the next three years to support our farmers and regional communities with rural financial counselling services.

The Government has committed to a new agreement with Tasmania's longstanding Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) provider, Rural Business Tasmania.

The Rural Financial Counselling Service provides a free, confidential, and independent service for primary producers, fishermen and small rural and regional businesses that are suffering financial hardship.

The RFCS plays a key role in helping primary producers to weather shocks, navigate the path to recovery, and lay the foundations for future prosperity and Rural Business Tasmania plays a pivotal role by providing the service to the State's primary industries and rural communities.

In the past six years, Tasmania's primary industries have experienced a number of major challenges, ranging from drought, fires and devastating floods, to biosecurity incursions, global market ups and downs, and now a once-in-a-century pandemic.

Tasmania's primary industries have been remarkably resilient in the face of these challenges. Our farmers have rebounded and are now well positioned to capitalise on opportunities for growth.

Favourable seasonal conditions, coupled with strong commodity prices, historically low interest rates, a lower Australian dollar, and surging agricultural land prices, are now delivering some of the best conditions for Australian agriculture in years.

Tasmanian agriculture continues to lead the nation and we're well on track to achieving our target to sustainably grow the farm-gate value of Tasmanian agriculture to \$10 billion by 2050.

The new funding for the RFCS forms part of the Tasmanian Government's \$2.6 million, three-year Rural Business Resilience Package that also includes co-funding to implement Future Drought Fund Programs in Tasmania.

I was pleased to join the Forum of Rural Stakeholders today, which is a stakeholder network facilitated by Rural Business Tasmania and comprises representatives from community and government organisations that are involved in the provision of services to the rural community.

More information about counselling services and support for farmers and rural communities in Tasmania, including the Rural Financial Counselling Service, can be found on the DPIPWE website: <https://dpiipwe.tas.gov.au/agriculture/government-and-community-programs/resources-for-farmers-rural-communities>