



9 March, 2006

CSA supporting separated parents in rural and regional areas

Whilst separated parenting is a common experience in Australia today - it is also a challenging one that can impact on the emotional well-being of families adjusting to their new circumstances.

The Child Support Agency's (CSA) General Manager, Matt Miller, said, "CSA is working with a range of health related professionals and organisations to help ensure separated families are receiving the support they need."

"For many families living in rural and regional Australia the drought has added extra financial and emotional strain which can put pressure on relationships and could lead to separation."

On Friday 9 March, at the 9th National Rural Health Conference, March 7-10 in Albury, CSA and the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) will be presenting a joint paper about how the agencies work together to provide services and support with a particular focus on rural men's health.

CSA works closely with, and refers families to, service providers funded under FaCSIA's *Family Relationship Services Program*, which also support families affected by drought, natural disaster or a major industry restructure.

FaCSIA and CSA also jointly run a National Stakeholder Engagement Group in order to remain connected to the issues faced by groups like Mensline Australia and Centacare that work closely with families.

Mr Miller said, "CSA's free *Me & My* booklets are a valuable tool for all separated families, particularly those in regional and rural areas where access to help and advice may be limited."

"The booklets are full of tips and hints on the key areas of separation including: children, well-being, money, the ex, and new relationships."

Parents, health professionals, and community groups can obtain information about services in their area via CSA's Community Service Directory on www.csa.gov.au

Mr Miller is also encouraging separated parents to contact CSA on 131 272 or visit their local regional service centre if their income and child support payments are impacted by the drought.

"I understand that these changes in income can put a lot of pressure on finances. It can also make it hard to predict income during a particular child support period," he said.

Copies of the free booklets and CD ROM are available by phoning 1800 040 972.

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Media enquiries should be directed to Michelle Heins on 0401 945 373 or media@csa.gov.au

Note:

In rural and regional areas of NSW, there are over 180,000 separated parents

In rural and regional areas of VIC, there are over 90,000 separated parents