

## Media statement

8 February 2016

### **Drought worker supports community resilience**

The Queensland Mental Health Commission has provided \$50,000 to help Richmond Shire Council employ a drought support worker.

Queensland Mental Health Commissioner Dr Lesley van Schoubroeck said Ellen Langston commenced work at Richmond last Monday (1 February 2016).

“Ellen will work with graziers and their families as well as rural communities to promote personal and mental wellbeing and resilience.

“Based in the Shire of Richmond, Ellen will also work across the neighbouring drought declared shires of Flinders and McKinlay, delivering training, seminars, workshops and linkages to individuals, businesses and groups,” Dr van Schoubroeck said.

“We are talking about families and communities under significant stress and hardship. We can’t change the contributing factors caused by the drought, but we can help families gather the tools, knowledge, and skills to deal with what may seem like never-ending life blows.”

Richmond, Flinders and McKinlay Shires have each contributed a further \$10,000 for the counsellor.

“Graziers and their families face enough struggles now. We need to help rural communities meet future challenges,” Richmond Shire chief executive Peter Bennett said.

“This position will work with stakeholders to drive economic, social, physical and mental resilience and innovation in grazing communities, addressing local issues.”

Dr van Schoubroeck said the QHMC had distributed more than \$500,000 to local government and community organisations as part of its *Stronger Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Grants Program*. The grant program is to help improve the mental health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders while minimising the impact of problematic drug, alcohol and substance use in communities.

For more information about Ellen and her work for the communities of Flinders, McKinlay and Richmond Shires, phone (07) 4741 3277.