



## More needs to be done for rural mental health says Rural Resources founder

Rural Resources Online founder Brigid Price has backed the comments of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, agreeing rural mental health services are in crisis and calling on the government for more to be done.

Ms Price heads up a modern day bush telegraph for the rural community of Australia, and notes stories of depression, anxiety, and mental distress are all too common, but the services to support people often fail to meet their needs.

“The rural community is tough, but that doesn’t make them immune to needing a helping hand. We have generations of families working in a tough environment, under tough physical conditions, with a tough economic backdrop. That strain starts to tell.”

“Advances in technology and the need for economies of scale in production mean less workers on stations. Jobs that once required a few workers are now solitary in nature. Men in particular, are not working side by side with other men. Communities are in decline and opportunities to ‘check-in’ with each other are reducing.”

“Humans are wired for connection. They need other people to interact with who empathise with where they are at and it seems the RFDS and GPs are the ones currently filling the gap.”

“We often hear the stories of farmers in financial and mental distress, but sadly it’s the cold hard statistics that paint the true picture.

Suicide rates in rural regions are 40 per cent higher than in metropolitan areas. In remote areas the rate almost doubles. Meanwhile, 50 per cent less money is spent on mental health services in rural and remote Australia.”

The Royal Flying Doctors this week revealed they saw 24,500 people to provide mental health counselling last year alone but could double or triple that service tomorrow and still not touch the surface.

“Guarding the mental health of a rural community is not a responsibility that should fall to the local GP. These highly committed doctors are too busy dealing with physical ailments in townships where they often know their patients well.

“Nor should the Royal Flying Doctors be shouldering the burden. This amazing charity is a lifeline for the bush that’s clearly becoming overwhelmed with the task of psychological support.”

Ms Price continued it wasn’t just farmers and adults feeling the distress.

“In recent weeks we’ve seen the tragic suicide of a young teen from a rural community due to cyber bullying. Surely that indicates that more needs to be done.

“This has been a massive wake-up call for many parents who weren’t aware of the online world their children were accessing.”

“We need mental health support for our rural communities, and the infrastructure that allows our children to grow up healthy, happy and with a positive perspective of rural life. We then need the tools and the professionals to assist if someone starts falling through the cracks.

“Every family needs a farmer, but we need the right support. It’s a tough gig that we take on gladly, but there are times when it takes a toll.”

Brigid Price is available to talk about the challenges of farming and provide a perspective of the mental health services needed to support rural life.

You can learn more about Rural Resources Online at [www.ruralresources.com.au](http://www.ruralresources.com.au) including recent articles about assisting rural children in a remote yet online world.

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About Brigid Price and RuralResources Online

As a city girl turned farmer's wife, Queensland beef producer Brigid Price is proud to call Rural Australia home. Now she's helping it find its shared voice through an online initiative that's fast becoming the modern day "bush telegraph" for the nation's farmers.

Brigid is the creator of RuralResources Online, a comprehensive website that unites Australian farmers through resources, shared knowledge, expert skills, and the all-important stories of community and spirit encapsulated by life on the land.

Website: <http://www.ruralresources.com.au/>

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