

Media Release 21 June 2017 Central Western Qld Small Business & Individuals Financial Counsellor Finishing

The Small Business and Individuals Financial Counsellor (SBIFC) servicing the Central Western Qld region will be ceasing on 30 June 2017.

Over its 16mth term the service provided financial counselling support to approximately 45 clients across 14 Central West towns.

David Arnold, CEO of RAPAD, who administers the SBIFC service, said the SBIFC role was an excellent initiative originating from the Central Western Rural Wellness Network, which is a multi-stakeholder group representative of the social, financial, and well-being stakeholders in the Central West region.

“At a time of severe drought the Wellness Network identified the need for the service, and with everyone’s input, and support from Minister Cameron Dick, the SBIFC position came to fruition back in early 2016”, said Mr Arnold.

The SBIFC program has been funded by Queensland Government’s Department of Health on a one off non-recurrent basis from 1 May 2016 to 30 June 2017 however with additional funding provided by RAPAD, the program started in mid March 2016. The Royal Flying Doctor Service are also strong supporters working with RAPAD in its administration.

“Given the continuing drought and its impacts on small business, RAPAD advocated to Government earlier in 2017, and we were hoping that funding may have been allocated in the recent State budget to keep the role going, however this was not the case”, said Mr Arnold.

Russell Lowry, who filled the SBIFC role wont be lost from the region, as he has gained full time employment with the Longreach Regional Council (LRC).

“Russell has been managing the exit of clients over these last few weeks in conjunction with his new role with LRC, and for this I’m grateful to both him and LRC CEO, Ian Bodill, said Mr Arnold. Russell could have easily just moved on upon his resignation but his dedication ensured he continued on in a part time capacity working weekends and after hours so clients can be exited in an appropriate manner”, said Mr Arnold.

On behalf of the Board and many others who supported the role, I’d like to thank the State Government and Minister Dick for the funding support”, said Mr Arnold.

The SBIFC program provided free assistance to Central West Queensland non-rural small business owners and individuals, who were suffering from financial hardship, to allow them to manage the challenges of industry change, adjustment and sustainability as the result of the current drought and on-going adverse economic conditions.

Ends

Contact: David Arnold – 0428583301

 (07) 4652 5600

 info@rapad.com.au

 117 Eagle Street | PO Box 592
Longreach Q 4730

 @RAPADCWQ

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