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## RURAL FINANCIAL COUNSELLORS TO CASE MANAGE CLIENTS

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The magnitude of change facing farming families in the current economic, environmental and financial climate has prompted Rural Financial Counselling Service SA Inc (RFCSSA) to offer case management to its many clients.

General Manager of RFCSSA, Kay Matthias said that this is a service that would be of enormous benefit to clients.

“While we will still maintain our traditional method of operating, with the complexity of issues faced by farmers and small businesses in financial difficulty, we need to ensure that we provide a structured and coordinated approach to support them while they consider their options in light of climate change, industry adjustment and drought,” she said.

Traditionally the Rural Financial Counselling Service has provided a key service to the farming sector and small rural businesses that has included:

- structural adjustment issues in agriculture
- crisis management (including cash flow budgets, bank and financial negotiations)
- access to current drought support (including the Exceptional Circumstances [EC] business and income support application processes)
- one to one support for farming families under financial distress.

“The role of Rural Financial Counsellors (RFCs) will change from a focus on assisting the farmer and small rural business clients to access the range of EC assistance available, to case managing their clients through an Action Planning approach to help them adjust to the impacts of climate change and improve their financial security.

“The intention is for farmers to set goals and take action to improve their financial and business planning skills with the RFC’s support. This should ultimately improve the farmer’s self-reliance and resilience,” Ms Matthias said.

Case management is a planned approach to service delivery for clients with complex and diverse needs. It represents a coordinated, consistent and individualised approach for the client and their family.

For many farmers experiencing financial hardship there are often a range of complex and competing issues that can affect the farmer’s capacity to manage and deal effectively with their current situation.

Clients wishing to make an appointment to see a rural financial counsellor can phone the RFCSSA freecall hotline number of 1800 836 211.

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