



## **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

### **STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITIES PROJECT**

#### **Background**

Since 2007 MSF has been successful in obtaining annual grants from the Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, to assist rural communities in drought affected areas. In this financial year they have guaranteed a further 3 years of funding (\$172,338 x 3 including GST). Lois Beckwith has worked with the MSF Board and staff for many years previously delivering the project in the field and she has been engaged by MSF to undertake this years implementation. The project commenced on July 1 and a full plan for the three year project is required by the end of July.

#### **Rationale**

The program continues its aim of providing support to farming communities and to empower locals to tackle local issues and formulate positive local initiatives which will support the individual, the family, and the wider farming community. This round will focus more on capacity building through people and less on community assets of a physical nature. The buzz words include leadership development, skill and knowledge development, volunteering, networks, partnerships, and holding community events across all age groups.

#### **Why is MSF involved**

In keeping with our vision of dynamic, profitable, and sustainable farming we are able to access significant funding to improve our capacity to be better farmers in coping with continuous change. The project will help our communities to remain vigorous and sustainable.

#### **Project Objectives**

The project has the following objectives:

- 1 Assist small farming communities to identify capacity building opportunities and plan activities which will be driven by local volunteers.
- 2 To form partnerships to tackle local issues and formulate local activities (organize events, social gatherings, workshops, seminars, field days, fun nights, etc)
- 3 Build skills and knowledge amongst farmers, family members and the wider rural community.
- 4 Assist the community to participate in volunteering, mentoring and leadership development.

## Project Plan of Delivery

Thirty plus small communities have been identified to be involved in the 3 year project; approximately 12 per year.

In 2011-12 we plan to combine 3 to 5 small cluster communities into a larger district cluster to deliver more professional workshops with a wider diversity of participants . ie Mallee Track Victoria, Balranald District NSW , Karoonda District SA.

Each district cluster will have a budget of \$18,500 to allocate in their area..

The project manager will identify community members who are willing to attend a workshop in their district and recruit a volunteer co-ordinator to work with.

The project manager will facilitate the workshop to

- Identify community issues, concerns, interests, and opportunities.
- share details of activities and workshops that may be of interest
- help the group develop tailor made activities.
- Agree on plan of action

The project manager will work with the volunteer co-ordinator and other volunteers to implement and pay for the activities.

The project manager will evaluate the outcomes and supply the funder with data and reports

## Time Frame of Project Activities

**July and August** research, planning, organizing district clusters and research training providers.

**September-November** finalize plans, commence local activities.

**December-May** implement cluster plans

**June** finalize the years project.

## Workshops, Seminars and Events

TARGETING; school children, youth, farmers, farmers partners and families, community volunteers and volunteer groups in the district

## POSSIBLE TOPICS

We need your feedback and more ideas to share with clusters. These topics are to give ideas that can be developed into the local plan. It can be any community get together or event agreed to by the cluster.

Use of technology on farms (play sport camera, social media etc)	Making the most of your computer	Financial management
Communications for farm families	Business planning	Succession planning

Work-life-balance	Preventing volunteer burnout	Sheep genetics
Climate change/carbon credits	Genetics and nutrition	Feasibility planning
Goverance for community groups	Fund raising and grant pursuit	Marketing produce
Youth volunteering	Time management	Leadership skills
Community directories/networking	Mentoring	Time management
Young mums interaction	Parenting skills	Father son activites
Mother daughter activities	Youth forums and activities	First aid
School fun sessions, self esteem, leadership, networking, role modelling	Occupational health and safety	Fun local events, celebrate Christmas, school year end, etc
Sporting events, picnics,		

### **Project Contact Details**

Dr Lois Beckwith

Project Manager.

Phone 50215605 or Mobile 0418592462

Email [Lois@msfp.org.au](mailto:Lois@msfp.org.au)