

MEDIA RELEASE

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Drought Exhibition represents ongoing struggle

“The images are an important reminder of the life of our farmers and graziers as they battle through the worst drought this region has endured in three generations,” Dr Ricki Jeffery, Diocesan Director, CentacareCQ.

STRIKING, heartbreaking, eye-opening – some of the words used to describe the images in a unique photography exhibition, coming to the Emerald Art Gallery on February 6, 2015.

“Drought... what next” is a project by social services organisation CentacareCQ, aimed at keeping the ongoing issue of drought in the minds of townspeople and politicians.

Dr Ricki Jeffery from CentacareCQ said the exhibition – featuring works by photographer Anne Smith - was created in collaboration with drought-affected landholders in the Central West, who wanted to share their stories with the wider community.

“CentacareCQ received federal funding to help drought-affected families and when we asked the landholders how best we could help them, we heard overwhelmingly that they simply wanted the wider community to know their struggles were not over,” Dr Jeffery said.

“This exhibition is a reminder to those on the coast, in the towns and cities, and to the politicians, that the effects of the drought are devastating and long-lasting – the recent rain is not a ‘magic fix’ and it will take a long time for seriously drought stricken communities to heal and recover.”

First launched in Longreach in December 2014, Dr Jeffery said ***“Drought... what next”*** would also be shown in Barcaldine, before

making its way to Brisbane.

“Eventually, we’d like to see these unforgettable photographs in Canberra’s National Gallery,” she said.

Peter Maguire, Mayor of Central Highlands Regional Council, will officially open the exhibition in Emerald on February 6, and he encouraged his community to rally behind the event.

“I think this exhibition is a wonderful concept and an excellent way to demonstrate what drought really means to those people living through the experience,” Mr Maguire said.

“Our community is also suffering from a downturn, in terms of the resources sector, and I believe the locals can empathise with the farmers and graziers in the west.”

“Drought... what next” will be launched at the Emerald Art Gallery, 65 Egerton Street, on Friday February 6 at 6:00pm and everyone is welcome to attend.

Photo Caption: A photo from the “Drought... what next” exhibition, taken by Anne Smith. The return of agistment cattle to a destocked property brings mixed feelings of relief and concern for a struggling grazier.

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