

News Release

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ANZ announces farm drought assistance package

ANZ Bank today announced an assistance package to help farmers in drought-affected areas of the North Island.

This week the Government declared a state of drought in Taranaki and parts of Wellington and western Manawatu-Whanganui after dry conditions seldom seen so early in summer.

"As with any serious weather event that impacts on dairy and meat production, the effects of the drought won't just be felt locally, but right through the economy," said Mark Hiddleston, ANZ Bank's Managing Director Commercial & Agri.

"The priority is to ensure that individual farms and the entire rural support network survives the impacts, and production is restored when weather conditions improve."

ANZ announced a drought assistance package, which includes:

- Suspending loan principal repayments;
- Waiving fees associated with restructuring business loans considered necessary due to impacts of extreme weather;
- Waiving fees for term finance and investments which improve performance and the ability to respond to climatic variation in future years;
- Waiving the interest rate reductions associated with accessing funds on term deposits ahead of maturity date due to financial hardship; and
- Providing access to discounted short-term funding to help farmers get through the immediate challenges while also protecting their long-term productivity.

"Each farm is different, and we can offer targeted assistance, but we recognise that the situation may require more complex solutions for some," Mr Hiddleston said

"We'd encourage farmers to act early and engage advisors to develop a plan, consulting with their bankers on funding requirements."

While it was important for farmers to look after their businesses during difficult times, it was also important for them to look after themselves and their families.

"Farmers are used to dealing with adverse weather, but the impacts go beyond finances and are a major source of stress for some customers," Mr Hiddleston said.

"Serious weather events cause significant challenges and anxiety. We urge farmers to communicate regularly with their family, advisors – including their bank – and support networks."

For media enquiries contact:

Emma Mellow 021614165