



STUART GRIMLEY MP

Member for Western Victoria
State Leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party



MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 12 November, 2019

Grimley “Exposing” Mental Health Helpers: The Naked Farmer

Stuart Grimley MP has voiced his support for Western Victoria farmers and congratulated farmer support groups – including rural mental health advocate The Naked Farmer Ben Brooksby - in Parliament today.

The MP for Western Victoria (“at risk of not mentioning all the support groups”) congratulated FarmerPower, WestVic Dairy Farmers and Wimmera’s Ben Brooksby; The Naked Farmer.

Mr Grimley said unfortunately there was a feeling of less attention on mental health support of farmers since the drought status was lifted some years ago, but that farmers were still finding it tough.

Drought is not the only hardships farmers face; in Parliament Mr Grimley said “rates, debt and the demanding physical slog of working the farm make it hard to continue at times.”

As a result of being ‘out of drought’, the Rural And Remote Engagement (RARE) program (funded through Department of Social Services Federal Drought Funding) was cut some years ago. It consisted of workers and counsellors who visited farmers in regional Victoria and often included visiting farmers who may not have asked for help otherwise.

Mr Grimley’s speech follows his campaign for farmers in Western Victoria to establish farmer support groups as a social outlet for those who might be working alone on the land all day or those who just want someone to chat to.

Mr Brooksby, who is the mastermind behind the social media profile The Naked Farmer, supports Mr Grimley’s concept of his office being a conduit between farmers seeking help and the organisations offering it.

The Wimmera Farmer says The Naked Farmer concept, whereby farmers pose naked in rural settings, is supposed to “start a conversation” and that “if my nana’s friends go to her house and see my calendar with the naked bodies in it, it’s going to start a conversation and eventually lead to mental health, isn’t it?”.

The Naked Farmer operates to raise awareness and funds for farmer mental health.

Stuart Grimley MP said in Parliament:

“...our primary producers are the backbone of regional Victoria. They are the economic drivers of our regional communities.

Whilst professional help cannot be understated and is absolutely necessary, the support of peers – and ones who understand the struggles you might be facing – is extremely important.

Congratulations to all those who are supporting farmers’ mental health and to those farmers who need help, know that it is out there.”

Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

“We’re looking to provide farmers with as much help as possible and let them know there is help out there.

Just because we may not be classed as in a drought, doesn’t mean it’s not a difficult time for farmers. Rates are increasing, debt is growing in many cases and farming can be a lonely, physically challenging job.

The Naked Farmer is such a great concept, because it absolutely starts a conversation; a conversation that farmers often don’t want to have.”

Stuart Grimley MP - Media Adviser:

Olivia Nicholls / 0459 419 755 / olivia.nicholls@parliament.vic.gov.au