

Drought-stricken central west on display

The grit and endurance of landholders in Queensland's drought-stricken central west is the subject of a striking photography exhibition touring the state.

The Drought...What Next exhibition, launched in Longreach in December, is currently showing in Emerald and will soon travel to Barcaldine before arriving in Brisbane later in the year.

Produced by social services organisation CentacareCQ, the exhibition features works by photographer Anne Smith.

CentacareCQ director Ricki Jeffery said the organisation had asked drought-affected families how an offer of federal funding should be best used to help them.

"We heard overwhelmingly 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



Dry, sunburnt grazing land in drought stricken regional Queensland

long time for seriously drought stricken communities to heal and recover."

Mayors Cr Joe Owens (Longreach Regional Council), Cr Peter Maguire (Central Highlands Regional Council) and Cr Rob Chandler (Barcaldine Regional Council) have all urged their communities to support the exhibition.

"As people on the land slow down their spending, the effect then spreads in to town and small businesses start to suffer as well. Drought affects everyone in some way – the drier it gets the more we all suffer. We are all in this together," Cr Owens said.

For exhibition details visit:
<http://annesusesmith.com/drought2.php>. ■