

# Try to stay positive

As we prepare to farewell the old year and welcome a new one, spare a thought for those in the country who end one year of drought with the prospect of another.

But it's important to remember, when people feel surrounded by doom and gloom it's most vital they can find some lightness and fun in their lives.

You can't change the practicalities of a serious drought, but you can make small changes to the way you handle negative situations.

It can make all the difference between a life that's depressing and a life worth living.

Try to focus on the things over which you have some control, rather than things you can't do anything about.

Things that are within your power are your relationships with your family. Even making the effort to be a little positive about the future will rub off on those around you.

Planning a family activity or doing something pleasurable with the family can give you a break from the doom and gloom that tends to infiltrate life in a drought.

It comes back to the need to celebrate our humanity despite what is going on around us, because people are still valued and important to us. And we still need to look after our relationships and those who are important to us.

At Relationships Australia we have run several programs in country schools in the past year as a way of bringing families together in a positive atmosphere. These activities enrich life when things seem bleak. They have also provided us with a way of getting brochures out to people with tips for handling the psychological effects of the drought, and where to go for help.

The Local Hero program reached adults through their children because students prepared presentations for an audience about who was their special local hero. Parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles featured largely as local heroes.

The positive "vibe" that this engendered was another powerful way of helping people cope in the current drought that permeates their lives.

As we enter 2008 in the country, it's important that we don't isolate ourselves, but come together as a community to remind ourselves we are here for one another, despite what drought is doing to our lives.

## Survival tips

- **Try to face the new year with some hope, even if you feel it's just another year of drought.**
- **Make the effort to keep your relationships positive and do some family activities, because these will make a difference to your lives**
- **Don't retreat into isolation. Keeping community contacts is vital to psychological survival.**