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'The centre has changed farmers' lives everywhere'

Tam Phillips, with her family on their Glenthompson farm

## Farmers' health body

**Richard Willingham**  
State Political Correspondent

An innovative and highly successful farmers' health body will close this year if it does not receive government funding.

The National Centre for Farmer Health, based in Hamilton, is a partnership between Western District Health Service and Deakin University. It provides health checks and education for farmers as well as advocacy and research.

More than 10 years ago it set up the award-winning Sustainable

Farm Families program, which aims to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of farm families.

The approach deals with the unique challenges of remote families, including their mental and physical health.

Tam Phillips, whose family owns a farm in the Western District community of Glenthompson, said the centre had changed farmers' lives everywhere. Her family took part in the Sustainable Farm Families project more than three years ago, which involved workshops as well as regular health checks and monitor-

ing. Ms Phillips said the program and tests showed she was at risk of several diseases. As a result, she changed her habits. "It was an eye-opener," she said.

The success of the program had inspired her to spread the message to others and to take courses with the centre. The message is clear from the centre that healthy farmers are more productive.

"A healthy, effective rural community is one that is well informed and has the understanding of risks associated with their workplace," Ms Phillips said.



Photo: Robln Sharrock

## facing chop

One project with which she has been particularly impressed - and one that her husband John has been involved in - is research into neurological health, exposure to organophosphates in pesticides and Parkinson's disease.

Four years of Victorian government funding ended in June 2012. Since then the program has survived with grants for projects commissioned by various states and bodies, with the number of staff dwindling to just two.

Centre director Susan Brumby said that unless it received funding -

they are seeking \$1 million a year for four years, split between the federal and Victorian governments - the organisation will close.

Both governments say they support the centre but have given no guarantees ahead of the state and federal budgets, with the state Coalition putting pressure on its federal counterparts.

A Victorian government spokesman said in November it proposed a 1:2 cost-share arrangement with the federal government.

The program has the support of the Victorian Farmers Federation.

## CBA at cen

**Adele Ferguson  
Deb Masters**

The man at the centre of the Commonwealth Bank financial services inquiry has lashed out, claiming it never properly supervised him or supervised his

Don Nguyen, one of the financial planners at the Commonwealth Bank's Australian Securities Investments Commission from 2007 to 2011, gave financial advice until 2011. Nobody at the bank did this.

Mr Nguyen allegedly created unauthorised accounts for his clients without their permission. The bank paid hundreds of his clients \$20 million in compensation.

In *Banking Bad*, a special investigation by Fairfax Media's ABC's *Four Corners* program on Monday night, Nguyen speaks for the first time. Nobody at the bank, including the compliance department,

## Twitter

Twitter could be faster in detecting earthquakes, bushfires, cyclones and even terrorism than conventional sources with new CSIRO monitoring tweets and automatic alerting of services.

The Emergency Awareness tool operates the clock, analysing tweets, and takes a few minutes to detect an event. The system has

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