

Funding reprieve gives farmer health centre a new lease of life

By **ROB HARRIS**

THE National Centre for Farmer Health was thrown a lifeline by the Federal Government yesterday.

The Hamilton-based program, which undertakes re-

search into the health and safety of farming communities, will receive \$375,000 from the Commonwealth to remain open for another 12 months.

The funding coincides with a Victorian Government commitment of \$250,000.

"It's fantastic that we will be able to keep our work going," centre director Sue Brumby said. "Unfortunately it comes after we have left staff go, but it is a reward for all the advocacy we have done."

The centre, a partnership

between Western District Health Service and Deakin University, set up the award-winning Sustainable Farm Families program, which won international recognition.

First supported by the Victorian Labor Government in

2008, its funding ended in June 2012 and it has since survived on grants for projects.

More than 2500 people, many from drought and flood-affected regions, have taken part in programs since 2003.

Federal Liberal member for

Wannon Dan Tehan said the grant would help it deliver programs that promoted well-being for farming families.

Western District Health Service chief Jim Fletcher congratulated Mr Tehan for his advocacy of the centre.