



Program sustains families

Farmers from Strathmerton and surrounding district have an exciting opportunity to attend a Sustainable Farm Families program in February.

Sustainable Farm Families is an award-winning initiative of Western District Health Service, Hamilton, delivered in partnership with the Victorian Department of Primary Industries.

Sustainable Farm Families health industry leader Sue Crowther, who will deliver the program locally as a Cobram District Community health nurse, said 600 farmers across the state had already taken part in the program and every participant recommended it to other farmers and helped shape the program.

"The program covers a range of areas including cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, women and men's health, stress, depression, farm safety, nutrition and exercise.

All participants also have a health assessment which is available to farming men and women," Mrs Crowther said.

Agriculture Minister Joe Helper said the Sustainable Farm Families program's focus was to improve the physi-



Valuable support: Leigh Barr (left) and Phil Gundrell, from the UDV Strathmerton branch, welcome Cobram District community nurse Sue Crowther, who will run the Sustainable Farm Families program in Strathmerton next month.

cal and mental health of farmers and their families.

"This program is about recognising that for many Victorian farming families the drought's impact continues to affect their lives; and helping

people get through that," Mr Helper said.

Mrs Crowther said farmers who had completed the program said it had enhanced their overall health with everything from better eating

to improved farm safety.

Some also found they were able to make better decisions because they had a new perspective of how important their health and families were in their lives.