

Drought Conditions

Support in Central and East Gippsland

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

MARCH 2019

TECHNICAL SUPPORT		
On-Farm Drought Infrastructure Support Grants	Grants of up to \$5,000 (ex-GST) are available to eligible farm businesses in Central and East Gippsland. Eligible farm businesses are required to provide at least dollar for dollar matching funding co-contribution. The grants program will assist farm businesses implement on-farm infrastructure that improves drought management and preparedness.	Call Rural Finance on 1800 260 425 or visit https://www.ruralfinance.com.au/
Technical and decision-making support for farm businesses	Additional services to be delivered by Agriculture Victoria and associated industry partners that will provide increased technical support to assist farm businesses manage dry seasonal conditions.	For upcoming farmer workshops, dry season preparedness information visit www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons or contact your local Agriculture Victoria office for more information
One-on-one consultation sessions	<p>Agriculture Victoria is continuing to provide Central and East Gippsland producers with the opportunity to engage in one-on-one consultation sessions to assist them to manage current seasonal conditions and access support services.</p> <p>These consultations cover a range of topics including feed budgeting, feed rations, partial budgets, hay and crop decision making, water use and resource management, in addition to signposting other services such as Rural Financial Counsellors, Farm Household Allowance and concessional loans programs.</p> <p>For dairy farmers, Agriculture Victoria is providing this service in collaboration with GippsDairy.</p>	<p>For information contact Agriculture Victoria:</p> <p>Livestock: Darren Hickey, Bairnsdale (03) 5152 0496</p> <p>Dairy: Maria Rose Maffra (03) 5147 0843 or David Shambrook Leongatha (03) 5662 9999.</p> <p>Irrigation Janice Dowe, Maffra (03) 5147 0854</p>
Stock Containment Areas	Agriculture Victoria has developed a package of resources to support farmers in designing stock containment areas. Stock containment areas are a valuable tool to manage livestock and to protect soil and pasture resources during adverse seasonal conditions.	For dry season preparedness information visit www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons or contact your local Agriculture Victoria office for more information
Feeding Beef and Sheep	Agriculture Victoria has developed booklets on feeding and managing beef and sheep during dry seasonal conditions.	
Weather and Climate	Information, tools and resources to support climate change risk management within the Victorian agricultural sector.	

REGIONAL SUPPORT		
Managing wildlife	The Drought Relief Authority to Control Wildlife program supports the control of wildlife through increased state-wide processing resources under the Authority To Control Wildlife (ATCW) permit system.	Call the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning on 136 186
Emergency Water Supply Point (EWSP) improvement program	A new initiative to improve access to EWSPs across areas where there is a high incidence of water carting. This program will provide additional access to emergency water supply points for both stock and domestic purposes.	Call the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning on 136 186 or visit www.water.vic.gov.au/groundwater/emergency-water-supply-points
NEW		
Catchment Management Authorities Drought Employment Program	A program managed by East and West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority to provide off-farm employment and training to farmers, farm workers and individuals affected by drought.	Call East Gippsland CMA Reception on (03) 5152 0600 or egcma@egcma.com.au
Regional Drought Coordinator	The coordinator acts as a key point of co-ordination at the local level, providing information on drought services, support options, emerging risks and pressures in their region.	Call Prue McTaggart, Agriculture Victoria, Bairnsdale, (03) 5152 0600
Community Resilience Program	East Gippsland and Wellington Shires are eligible to receive funding to support community events that bring communities together, build resilience and raise awareness of drought support services. Other small infrastructure projects such as improvements to community hubs, halls and precincts will also be considered.	<p>East Gippsland Shire Council, visit www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au</p> <p>For community grants contact Kathryn Macdonald on (03) 5153 9500 or kathrynmac@egipps.vic.gov.au</p>

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PERSONAL AND FAMILY SUPPORT		
Back to School Support	Back to School support aims to help families with the cost of uniforms, shoes and other items for families in Central and East Gippsland government schools.	Contact your child's school.
Camps, Sports and Excursion fund	The Camps, Sports and Excursion fund extends payment to include all students from drought affected areas (that do not hold a means-tested concession card) from Term 1 2019 to ensure students in drought affected areas participate in the learning opportunities that exist beyond the classroom.	Contact your child's school.
Kindergarten Support	<p>The Drought Kindergarten Fee Subsidy provides support for all children in the year before school attending kindergarten in drought affected areas, and all children who live in drought affected areas that attend the year before school kindergarten in other areas.</p> <p>Kindergarten services will receive the subsidy on behalf of families through normal kindergarten funding processes.</p> <p>Kindergartens can also apply for a one-off grant to support their continued operation. All community-based kindergarten providers in Central and East Gippsland will be invited to apply for the financial hardship grant by the Department of Education and Training in early 2019.</p>	Contact the Department of Education and Training at: kindergarten.funding@edumail.vic.gov.au
Mental Health Support	<p>The new Mental Health Support package includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional counselling and co-ordination • Psychological first aid training • Lifeline Gippsland (telephone counselling and mentoring program) 	<p>Call the Agriculture Victoria Information Line on 136 186.</p> <p>If you need immediate assistance with your mental health and wellbeing, contact Lifeline on 13 11 14</p> <p>If you need emergency assistance, contact 000.</p>
National Centre for Farmer Health	<p>The NCFH provides leadership to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of farm men and women, farm workers, their families and communities.</p> <p>This program includes the delivery of health checks to farmers dealing with on-farm stress. Additional programs have been funded and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agrisafe Drought Service • Health and Lifestyle assessments • Community presentations • Interactive workshops • Service Co-ordinator 	Call the National Centre for Farmer Health on (03) 5551 8533 or visit farmerhealth.org.au
Look Over the Farm Gate Program	Look Over the Farm Gate will deliver health and wellbeing support for farmers and communities through community awareness and social and emotional wellbeing workshops and events.	Call 1300 882 833 or visit https://lookoverthefarmgate.org.au
MensLine Australia	24/7 service for men with relationship and family concerns.	Call 1300 78 99 78 or visit mensline.org.au
Kids Help Line	24/7 telephone and online counselling service for people aged 5 - 25.	Call 1800 55 1800 or visit kidshelpline.com.au
Family Relationship Service	Providing families with access to information about family relationship issues.	Call 1800 050 321 or visit familyrelationships.gov.au
Victorian Better Health Channel	Health and medical information that is quality assured, reliable, up to date and easy to understand.	Visit betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Beyondblue	24/7 telephone information and support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health.	Call 1300 224 636 or visit beyondblue.org.au
Lifeline	24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services.	Call 131 114 or visit lifeline.org.au

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FINANCIAL SUPPORT		
On-Farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate Scheme NEW	<p>The On-Farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate Scheme is now available to assist farmers impacted by drought and dry seasonal conditions invest in urgently-needed on-farm water infrastructure that addresses animal welfare needs.</p> <p>The rebate funding is being made available by the Australian Government.</p>	<p>Call Rural Finance on 1800 260 425 or visit www.ruralfinance.com.au</p>
Farm Business Assistance program <i>This program will open on March 15, 2019.</i>	<p>The Farm Business Assistance program will provide support payments for farm businesses that are experiencing significant financial pressure due to prolonged dry conditions and industry downturn. The program aims to provide immediate financial relief and alleviate some cost-of-living pressures.</p> <p>Farm Household Allowance (FHA) recipients and young farmers in Central and East Gippsland will receive \$3,500.</p> <p>Remaining commercial farms in Central and East Gippsland will receive \$2,500.</p>	<p>Guidelines are still being developed for the Farm Business Assistance program.</p> <p>For more information contact Agriculture Victoria on 136 186 or register your interest in this program by emailing: Drought.Support@ecodev.vic.gov.au</p>
Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS)	<p>Additional funding to support the RFCS provide free financial counselling to farmers and small related businesses who are in, or at risk of, financial hardship. Counsellors can assist applicants to apply for the Farm Household Allowance.</p>	<p>Call 1800 686 175 (toll free) or call Eastern RFCS: 1300 045 747 or visit www.agriculture.gov.au/aq-farm-food/drought/assistance/rural-financial-counselling-service</p>
Farm Household Allowance (Aust Govt)^	<p>The Australian Government makes an income support payment available to eligible farmers and their families experiencing financial hardship.</p>	<p>Call 132 316 or visit www.humanservices.gov.au</p>
Farmer Assistance Hotline (Aust Govt)	<p>Information on the Australian Government's support services available to farmers and rural communities.</p>	<p>Call 132 316 or visit www.humanservices.gov.au</p>
Farm Debt Mediation	<p>The scheme makes it compulsory for banks and other creditors to offer mediation to farmers before commencing debt recovery proceedings on farm mortgages.</p>	<p>Call the Agriculture Victoria Information Line on 136 186 or visit www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/business-management/farm-debt-mediation Email: farm.debt@ecodev.vic.gov.au</p>
Regional Investment Corporation Farm Business Concessional Loans (Aust Govt)^	<p>From 1 July 2018, farmers will need to apply to the RIC for the Australian Government's farm business concessional loans. The RIC will offer two loan products for eligible farm businesses: Drought Loans and Farm Investment Loans</p>	<p>Call 1800 875 675 or visit www.ric.gov.au/</p>

[^]Eligibility criteria and loan amounts have recently changed.

ACCESSIBILITY

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