

DROUGHT CONDITIONS SUPPORT

WELLINGTON AND EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRES

May 2019

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

The Victorian Government provides a range of assistance to support local communities and farm businesses manage the impacts of drought conditions. This includes information, tools and resources provided by Agriculture Victoria.

An overview of the support available is provided below. For more information drop into an Agriculture Victoria office, call 136 186 or visit www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons

FINANCIAL SUPPORT		
Pasture Recovery and Management Grant Program	<p>A grant of up to \$5,000 (ex-GST) is available to assist eligible farm businesses located in East Gippsland and Wellington Shires implement pasture restoration and other land management activities that may aid in pasture recovery.</p> <p>Eligible farm businesses are required to provide at least dollar for dollar matching funding co-contribution. The program will accept applications for expenditure incurred on or after 1 January 2019.</p>	<p>Call Rural Finance on 1800 260 425 or visit www.ruralfinance.com.au</p>
On-Farm Drought Infrastructure Support Grants	<p>Grants of up to \$5,000 (ex-GST) are available to eligible farm businesses in Wellington and East Gippsland shires. Eligible farm businesses are required to provide at least dollar for dollar matching funding co-contribution.</p> <p>The grants program will assist farm businesses implement on-farm infrastructure that improves drought management and preparedness.</p>	<p>Call Rural Finance on 1800 260 425 or visit https://www.ruralfinance.com.au</p>
On-Farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate Scheme	<p>The On-Farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate Scheme is 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>
Agriculture Energy Investment Plan	<p>Free on-farm energy assessments for farmers with energy costs above \$8,000 per annum. Grants covering 50% of the cost of energy saving equipment and on-farm renewable energy generation are available for up to \$50,000. Additional support for whole of production system upgrades and projects with broader multi-farm regional impacts.</p>	<p>Call the Business Victoria hotline on 13 22 15 or visit www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/agenery</p>
Farm Business Assistance Program	<p>The Farm Business Assistance program is available to eligible farm businesses that are identified as being the most at risk and in need of a boost now.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm Household Allowance (FHA) recipients and young farmers in Wellington Shire and East Gippsland Shire will receive \$3,500 • Remaining commercial farms in Wellington Shire and East Gippsland Shire will receive \$2,500. 	<p>Call Rural Finance on 1800 260 425 or visit ruralfinance.com.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/ag-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)^A	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	Call 1800 875 675 or visit www.ric.gov.au/
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TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Farm Business Financial Management for Dry Seasons	Delivered by Agriculture Victoria, these workshops will provide targeted and relevant information to boost awareness and capability in farm business planning, risk management and financial literacy. One follow-up individual consultation will be available to workshop participants to provide further support. Workshop dates and locations are available on Agriculture Victoria website.	Call the Agriculture Victoria Information Line on 136 186 or visit www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons
Technical and decision-making support for farm businesses	Agriculture Victoria delivers communication, technical and decision-making support services to assist farm businesses manage dry seasonal conditions. Working with our industry partners we provide services across industries including beef, sheep, dairy, grains, horticulture and irrigation. Agriculture Victoria also has technical information and tools on topics such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stock containment areas • Feeding and managing livestock during dry seasonal conditions • Resources to support climate change and risk management • Business management information and support for young farmers 	Call the Agriculture Victoria Information Line on 136 186 or visit www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons
One-on-one consultation sessions	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. 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. For dairy farmers, Agriculture Victoria is providing this service in collaboration with GippsDairy.	For information contact Agriculture Victoria: Livestock: Darren Hickey, Bairnsdale (03) 5152 0496 Dairy: Maria Rose, Maffra (03) 5147 0843 or David Shambrook, Leongatha (03) 5662 9999. Irrigation Janice Dowe, Maffra (03) 5147 0854
Stock Containment Areas	Agriculture Victoria has developed a package of resources to support farmers in designing and managing 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

PERSONAL AND FAMILY SUPPORT

Mental Health Support	The Mental Health Support package includes additional counselling and co-ordination and psychological first aid training.	Call the Agriculture Victoria Line on 136 186. If you need immediate assistance with your mental health and wellbeing, call Lifeline on 13 11 14. If you need emergency assistance, call 000.
Lifeline	24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services.	Call 131 114 or visit lifeline.org.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

National Centre for Farmer Health	The NCFH provides leadership to improve the health wellbeing and safety of farm men and women, farm workers, families and communities.	Call the National Centre for Farmer Health on (03) 5551 8533 or visit farmerhealth.org.au
Look Over the Farm Gate Program	A mental health and wellbeing initiative that delivers grants for community events and mental health training.	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
Farm Hub	The Farm Hub aims to provide farmers with a single portal through which they can access information about assistance and advice to manage hardship.	Visit www.farmhub.org.au
Victorian Better Health Channel	Health and medical information that is quality assured, reliable, up to date and easy to understand.	Visit www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au
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 or visit www.education.vic.gov.au
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 kindergarten.funding@edumail.vic.gov.au
Back to School Support	Provides new school uniforms, shoes and books for families who are facing hardship.	Contact your child's school or visit www.education.vic.gov.au
Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF)	Provides payments for eligible students to attend activities like school camps or trips, swimming and school-organised sport programs, outdoor education programs, excursions and incursions.	Contact your child's school or visit www.education.vic.gov.au
Royal Flying Doctor Service	Free, confidential mental health and wellbeing service for people living in rural and remote communities.	Call (03) 8412 0480 www.flyingdoctor.org.au/vic
Mental Health Care Plan	A mental health care plan entitles patients to Medicare rebates for up to 10 individual or 10 group appointments with a psychologist, occupational therapist or social worker in a year.	Contact your local GP for a referral www.healthdirect.gov.au/mental-health-care-plan
Community Health Care providers	Community Health services provide a range of primary health care services that could include: acute hospital care, medical center, home and community care, district nursing, women's health, allied health services (podiatry, occupational therapy etc.), counselling, pharmacy, referrals.	Contact your local Community Health service to confirm their services.

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
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
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.	East Gippsland Shire Council, visit www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au For community grants contact Kathryn Macdonald on (03) 5153 9500 or kathrynm@egipps.vic.gov.au
Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal	The Tackling Tough Times Together grant program helps communities access the resources they need to support one another through the ongoing effects of the drought. This program is designed to provide flexible funding to support community-based activities that both help to relieve current stressors and symptoms, and most importantly, build capacity and resilience for the future.	Contact the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal on 1800 170 020 or visit www.frrr.org.au/grants/tackling_tough_times_together.php
Regional Drought Coordinator	The coordinator is the key point of co-ordination at the local level, providing information on drought services, support options, emerging risks and pressures in their region.	Prue McTaggart, Agriculture Victoria, Bairnsdale, (03) 5152 0600

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