

Q&A – Victorian Bushfire Recovery Transport Support for Primary Producers

What is the Victorian Bushfire Recovery Transport Support program?

The **Victorian Bushfire Recovery Transport Support** program covers up to 50 per cent of the total freight costs to a maximum of \$15,000 (excluding GST) per farm business.

Applicants can apply for a combination of the following transport activities, transport of:

- emergency fodder for stock to fire-affected properties
- stock to agistment including returning stock
- stock to sale or slaughter
- emergency stock drinking water.

The Victorian Bushfire Transport Support program is a Category B measure under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements which aims to assist farmers.

The program is providing financial assistance to farmers affected by bushfires to meet immediate animal welfare and safety needs.

How much support is available?

Eligible farmers can apply for a 50 per cent subsidy of the total freight costs to a maximum of \$15,000 (excluding GST).

Who is eligible for transport support?

Producers (including apiarists) affected by bushfires in the following 15 local government areas will be eligible for emergency transport:

- Ararat
- Alpine
- Ballarat
- East Gippsland
- Glenelg
- Golden Plains
- Indigo
- Mansfield
- Northern Grampians
- Pyrenees
- Southern Grampians
- Towong
- Wangaratta
- Wellington
- Wodonga.

To be eligible for assistance the farmer must:

- have suffered a direct impact of the bushfires that commenced in December 2019-
- be located in an eligible local government area
- be a primary producer (this includes apiarists) who:
 - is registered as a primary producer with the Australian Tax Office and has an ABN

- contributes a significant part of his/her labour and capital to the farming enterprise, and under normal business conditions, derives more than 51 per cent of his/her individual income from the farming enterprise.

How far am I able to move my stock, fodder or water?

A maximum distance of 1,500 km applies per movement of stock and fodder.

A maximum distance of 500 km applies per movement of water.

The subsidy only applies to the loaded portion of the journey.

What is in the minimum load?

The minimum load for stock is equivalent to 20 dry sheep equivalents. Loads of less than 20 dry sheep equivalents will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (e.g. transporting bulls or bees).

The minimum load for water and fodder is 500 kg.

Are apiarists eligible for transport support?

Eligible apiarists are eligible for a transport subsidy under all streams of transportation.

Applicants must sign a statutory declaration that the movement of beehives is abnormal to their usual management practices and is entirely as a result of the bushfire event.

Where the bushfire affected site is on:

- private land, a statement from the property owner that the land is bushfire affected must accompany each claim
- public land, a copy of the bee site licence must accompany each claim.

If the movement is undertaken by the owner for the purpose of buying bee food, receipts for the purchase of bee food are to be provided with the application.

I've claimed my transport on insurance or another source, can I also apply for the transport support?

Transport support is not available for transport costs covered by other sources, such as insurance or other grants.

Can I receive transport support for multiple movements of stock, emergency fodder or emergency water?

Yes. Farmers can apply for a 50 per cent subsidy for a combination of transport activities under this program up to a maximum of \$15,000 (GST exclusive).

Do I need to pay for the transport upfront?

Yes. Costs for transportation must be paid prior to lodging a claim application. The subsidy will be a re-imbusement.

I transport fodder with my own vehicle, can I apply for transport support?

Yes. In the case of an owner/driver, payment will be provided on a dollar amount per kilometre based on your vehicles mass.

For details of the kilometre rate and minimum loads, contact Rural Finance on 1800 260 425.

My property is affected by drought, can I apply for the transport support?

Farmers in East Gippsland and Wellington are eligible for a range of drought and dry season conditions support.

Where a farmer in East Gippsland and Wellington is also affected by bushfires, they can access both drought and dry season conditions support and bushfire recovery support, which includes transport support.

Where a farmer in East Gippsland and Welling is not affected by bushfires, they are not eligible for bushfire support but can still access a range of immediate support and support to build resilience.

For further information on drought support available, contact the department's customer contact centre on: 136 186 or email drought.support@agriculture.vic.gov.au

How do I apply for transport support?

To apply for the subsidy, a *Victorian Bushfires 2019/2020 Transport Support Program Primary Producer – Application* form will need to be completed and lodged via Rural Finance.

When can I apply for transport support?

Applications for transport support are available now and will remain open for six months.

Purchases must be made before 30 June 2020.

Applications must be submitted by 31 July 2020.

How can I find more information?

For further information on transport support, contact Rural Finance:

Ph: 1800 260 425

Email: governmentservices@ruralfinance.com.au

Fax: (03) 5441 8901

Web: ruralfinance.com.au

Postal address: GPO BOX 1313, Bendigo Central, Victoria 3552