

# VICTORIAN DROUGHT SUPPORT

PROGRAM ASSISTANCE FACT SHEET  
September 2015

A range of support is available from the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments for farm families and farm businesses experiencing the impacts of dry conditions.

Should you require more information and assistance please call the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources customer service centre on 136 186.

## Farm Management Options

### Farm Management

The Victorian Government provides a variety of services and information including helping farmers manage chemical use and prepare properties for emergencies such as drought and bushfires.

During drought there is a high risk of losing valuable soil as ground cover reduces. Wind can blow soil away causing erosion and the loss of valuable nutrients and topsoil. Bare areas will also be more prone to washing once the rain does come. Removing stock to containment areas before ground cover drops below 70 per cent will help minimize erosion. Retaining stubbles and minimizing tillage also helps prevent soil loss.

For more information call 136 186.

## Farm Business Support

### Drought Concessional Loans

The Commonwealth Government is offering a Drought Concessional Loans program in Victoria in 2015-16 to assist farm businesses manage financial pressures during drought and return to viability in the long term.

The scheme is to be available soon. In Victoria, Rural Finance is administering the scheme.

Call 1800 260 425 or visit  
[www.ruralfinance.com.au/industry-programs/drought-concessional-loans-scheme](http://www.ruralfinance.com.au/industry-programs/drought-concessional-loans-scheme)

### Farm Debt Mediation

The Farm Debt Mediation scheme can assist farmers in financial difficulty, offering a low cost, independent and confidential mediation service. The scheme makes it compulsory for banks and other creditors to offer mediation to farmers before commencing debt recovery proceedings on farm mortgages.

Call 136 186 or email  
[farm.debt@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:farm.debt@ecodev.vic.gov.au)

## Climate Information

### Climate information tools and resources

DEDJTR develops and communicates a number of important information products regarding climate science. The information is targeted to industry sectors and is designed to provide farm businesses with the tools and resources to support risk management and good decision making.

For more information call 136 186

## Personal Support – don't face issues alone

### Your Local GP

If you are dealing with stressful events you might find it helpful to talk them over with your local GP who can refer you to other appropriate support people.

### Telephone Counselling and Health Support

Telephone counselling services respond to callers with a wide range of concerns and personal emergencies. Services include:

- NURSE-ON-CALL on 1300 60 60 24
- Lifeline on 131 114

- Mensline on 1300 78 99 78
- BeyondBlue on 1300 224 636
- Parentline Victoria on 13 22 89
- Family Relationship Service on 1800 050 321

## Farm Household Support for financial stress

### Farm Household Allowance

The Farm Household Allowance is a Commonwealth Government initiative available to eligible farmers and their families experiencing financial hardship. The program provides a fortnightly allowance to farm households accessible through Centrelink.

Call 13 23 16 or visit:

[www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/farm-household-allowance](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/farm-household-allowance)

### Victorian Government Concessions

Concessions are available to low income Victorians experiencing difficulty in paying their council rates, water, gas and electricity bills. For each concession and/or benefit, there is an eligibility criterion.

For further information visit:

[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/concessions](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/concessions)

### Rural Financial Counselling Service

The Rural Financial Counselling service provides primary producers and small rural businesses that are experiencing hardship with free and impartial financial information, options, decision support and referral services.

1800 686 175 or [www.rfcs.gov.au](http://www.rfcs.gov.au)

## Animal welfare and livestock management

Farmers are responsible for the care and management of their livestock.

DEDJTR staff can provide advice and support for the management of livestock in dry conditions.

In addition, farmer networks such as the BetterBeef, Bestwool/Bestlamb programs connect farmers to the latest news and events for the production of livestock – including critical information on managing through drought and water shortages.

Information and advice for sheep producers:

**Contact:** Cathy Mulligan

Project Officer, Bestwool/Bestlamb

**Phone:** (03) 5258 0229 or 0438 341 970

**email:** [cathy.mulligan@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:cathy.mulligan@ecodev.vic.gov.au)

Information and advice for beef producers:

**Contact:** Cheriell Tidd

Project Officer, BetterBeef Network

**Phone:** (02) 6030 4521 or 0407 865 341

**email:** [cheriell.tidd@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:cheriell.tidd@ecodev.vic.gov.au)

To report concerns about Animal Welfare you can call the Customer Service Centre 136 186 or email [aw.complaint@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:aw.complaint@ecodev.vic.gov.au).

## Emergency water supply points

### Emergency water supply points

Victoria has a network of about 300 emergency water supply points which provide water for emergency stock and domestic purposes during severe dry seasonal conditions, surface water scarcity, and bushfires.

Contact your local council, rural or urban water corporation for further information about Emergency Water Supply points in your area and to confirm the information on the below map.

[www.delwp.vic.gov.au/water/emergency-water-supply-points](http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au/water/emergency-water-supply-points)