

# 2016 Drought Support Services in Victoria

A guide for individuals,  
farm families and  
businesses affected  
by drought

Updated March 2016  
to include \$10M Drought  
Support Fund



# 2016 Drought Support Services Guide

## Personal Assistance

| Initiative/ Service         | Description   | Eligibility/ Available to   | Timings                   | More information  |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---------------------------|---|
| Farm Household Allowance    | Income support payment, available to eligible farmers and their families experiencing financial hardship.   | Eligible farm families  | Ongoing                   | Call: 13 23 16<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.humanservices.gov.au">www.humanservices.gov.au</a>   |
| Victorian State Concessions | The Victorian Government offers a number of concessions designed to assist and improve the affordability of essential services for low-income Victorian households. | Eligible Commonwealth Concession Card holders.  | Ongoing                   | Visit: <a href="http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/concessions">www.dhs.vic.gov.au/concessions</a>   |
| Family Support              | Assistance for families affected by drought.  | Families  | Ongoing                   | If you are in need of material or financial assistance, please call the Salvos on: 1300 371 288 or 13 72 58   |
| Australian Tax Office       | Tax advice for drought affected tax payers.   | Individuals and Families  | Ongoing                   | Call: 13 11 42 and select option 3  |
| Foodbank Victoria           | Distributes meals to individuals and families across regional, rural and metro areas of Victoria, helping to feed over 100,000 Victorians each month.               | Individuals and Families  | Ongoing                   | Foodbank<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.foodbankvictoria.org.au">www.foodbankvictoria.org.au</a><br>Call: 9362 8300  |
| Drought Employment Program  | Employs farmers, farm workers and individuals affected by drought to undertake environmental works projects directed by the Catchment Management Authorities.       | Farmers, farm workers and individuals in Wimmera, North Central and Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) regions; along with those in West Wimmera, Horsham, Northern Grampians and Ararat shires located within the Glenelg Hopkins CMA region. | Until funding is expended | Wimmera CMA<br>Call: 5382 1544<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.wcma.vic.gov.au">www.wcma.vic.gov.au</a><br>Mallee CMA<br>Call: 5051 4377<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.malleecma.vic.gov.au">www.malleecma.vic.gov.au</a><br>North Central CMA<br>Call: 5448 7124<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.nccma.vic.gov.au">www.nccma.vic.gov.au</a><br>Glenelg Hopkins CMA<br>Call: 5571 2526<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.ghcma.vic.gov.au">www.ghcma.vic.gov.au</a> |

| <b>Initiative/ Service</b>   | <b>Description</b>  | <b>Eligibility/ Available to</b>   | <b>Timings</b>  | <b>More information</b>  |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| Back to School   | Children from disadvantaged families attending Victorian Government Schools are provided with uniforms, shoes and other essential items.  | Families   | Ongoing   | Contact your School Principal, Assistant Principal or Welfare Coordinator.   |
| Kindergarten fee subsidy in drought affected communities                             | Families that reside in specified drought affected areas are eligible for 15 hours per week of free kindergarten in the year before school.<br>Families who have already paid fees in 2016 will be reimbursed.<br>Kindergarten service providers within the specified areas will can apply for the a fee subsidy on behalf of families. | Families residing in the municipalities of Buloke, Yarriambiack, Loddon, Northern Grampians, Horsham, Hindmarsh, Gannawarra, Pyrenees, Central Goldfields, West Wimmera and Ararat.  | Available for the 2016 calendar year  | Department of Education and Training<br>North-Western regional office, Bendigo.<br>Call: 5400 3111<br>South-Western regional office, Ballarat<br>Call: 5337 8444   |
| Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF)   | Extended to students in specified areas that are currently enrolled in government and non-government schools.<br>Families who have already claimed the CSEF payment in 2015 may seek an additional 'one off' payment under the drought response package, which can be accessed prior to 30 June 2016.                                   | Families residing in the municipalities of Buloke, Yarriambiack, Loddon, Northern Grampians, Horsham, Hindmarsh, Gannawarra, Pyrenees, Central Goldfields, West Wimmera and Ararat.  | Available for the 2016 calendar year  | Parents/Guardians should contact their child's school in the first instance.<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/csef">www.education.vic.gov.au/csef</a> .<br>Or phone the Department of Education and Training's CSEF Helpdesk: 1800 060 970 |
| Agricultural Traineeships for School Leavers in drought affected north west Victoria | Support for local employment and training for school leavers in drought affected communities.   | School leavers in the municipalities of:<br>Buloke, Yarriambiack, Loddon, Northern Grampians, Horsham, Hindmarsh, Gannawarra, Pyrenees, Central Goldfields, West Wimmera and Ararat. | Traineeship start dates to be confirmed   | Skillinvest<br>Call: 5381 6200<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.skillinvest.com.au">www.skillinvest.com.au</a>  |
| Sport and Recreation Water Infrastructure Grants                                     | Grants will be provided to allow drought affected councils to complete priority sport and recreational water infrastructure projects.   | Councils in the following areas: Buloke, Yarriambiack, Loddon, Northern Grampians, Horsham, Hindmarsh, Gannawarra, Pyrenees, Central Goldfields, West Wimmera and Ararat.            | Discussions with local councils to finalise the funding priorities will be complete by April 2016 | Sport and Recreation Victoria<br>Call: 1300 650 172<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.sport.vic.gov.au">www.sport.vic.gov.au</a><br>Or call Paulo Lay, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning: 9637 9967  |

## Emotional and Health Support

| Initiative/ Service               | Description  | Eligibility/ Available to  | Timings  | More information  |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|----------|---|
| NURSE-ON-CALL                     | 24/7 phone service that provides immediate, expert health advice from a registered nurse.  | Individuals and families   | Ongoing  | Call: 1300 60 60 24   |
| Lifeline                          | 24/7 telephone counselling – Connect with someone who cares.   | Individuals and families   | Ongoing  | Call: 13 11 14<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.lifeline.org.au">www.lifeline.org.au</a>                           |
| Mensline Australia                | 24/7 service for men with relationship and family concerns.  | Men  | Ongoing  | Call: 1300 78 99 78   |
| Kids Help Line                    | 24/7 telephone and online counselling service for young people.  | Children   | Ongoing  | Call: 1800 55 1800<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.kidshelp.com.au">www.kidshelp.com.au</a>                       |
| Family Relationship Service       | Providing families with access to information about family relationship issues.  | Individuals and families   | Ongoing  | Call: 1800 050 321<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au">www.familyrelationships.gov.au</a> |
| Beyondblue                        | Information about issues associated with depression and anxiety.   | Individuals and families   | Ongoing  | Call: 1300 224 636<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.beyondblue.org.au">www.beyondblue.org.au</a>                   |
| National Centre for Farmer Health | Workshops to improve the health, safety and well-being of farm men and women, farm workers, their families and communities across Australia.                 | Individuals and families   | Ongoing  | Call: 5551 8533<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.farmerhealth.org.au">www.farmerhealth.org.au</a>                  |
| Victorian Better Health Channel   | Health and medical information that is quality assured, reliable, up to date, easy to understand, regularly reviewed and locally relevant.                   | Individuals and families   | Ongoing  | Visit: <a href="http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/">www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/</a>                           |
| Find a mental health service      | Mental health consultations.   | Individuals and families   | Ongoing  | Contact your local GP for a referral<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.health.vic.gov.au">www.health.vic.gov.au</a> |
| Parentline                        | Confidential, anonymous and free telephone counselling, information and referral service for parents.  | Victorian parents and carers with children from birth to school age. | Ongoing  | Families can call 13 22 89 (8am to midnight, 7 days a week)   |
| Maternal and Child Health Line    | 24/7 state-wide telephone service, which works alongside the Maternal and Child Health Service and is staffed by qualified maternal and child health nurses. | Victorian families with children from birth to school age.           | On going | Families can call 13 22 29 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)  |



| Initiative/ Service                      | Description  | Eligibility/ Available to   | Timings                   | More information                  |
|--|--|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Community engagement and support package | Provides local councils with support to implement important community events and activities that bring people together and promote visitation to drought impacted regions. | Councils in the following areas: Buloke, Yarriambiack, Loddon, Northern Grampians, Horsham, Hindmarsh, Gannawarra, Pyrenees, Central Goldfields, West Wimmera and Ararat. | Until funding is expended | Drought Information Line: 136 186 |

## Farm Support

| Initiative/ Service                              | Description   | Eligibility/ Available to  | Timings                                  | More information  |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| Farming and drought Information                  | Information to assist farmers affected by drought, as well as a broad range of agricultural issues.   | Farm businesses  | Ongoing                                  | Call: 136 186<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/drought">www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/drought</a>  |
| Drought workshops for farmers                    | Workshops for farmers to help them make the most of seasonal conditions.  | Farm businesses  | Ongoing                                  | Call: 136 186<br>Visit: <a href="http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/drought-preparedness/farmer-workshops">http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/drought-preparedness/farmer-workshops</a> |
| Animal Health and Welfare                        | 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.                | Farm businesses  | Ongoing                                  | Call: 136 186<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/drought">www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/drought</a>  |
| Rural Financial Counselling                      | Free and independent financial information, options, decision support and referral services.  | Primary producers, fishermen and small rural businesses who are suffering financial hardship | Ongoing                                  | Visit: <a href="http://www.rfcs.gov.au">www.rfcs.gov.au</a><br>Call 1800 686 175 (toll free) or call:<br>Western RFCS: 1300 735 578<br>Eastern RFCS: 5662 2566<br>North East RFCS: 1300 834 775<br>North West RFCS: 1300 769 489      |
| Australian Government Drought Concessional Loans | Loans for the re-structuring of existing eligible farm debt, funding operating expenses necessary to continue normal operations, and/or drought preparedness and recovery activities. | Farm businesses  | Current scheme available to 30 June 2016 | Loans are available through Rural Finance.<br>Call 1800 260 425<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.ruralfinance.com.au">www.ruralfinance.com.au</a>  |

| Initiative/ Service                             | Description  | Eligibility/ Available to   | Timings                                    | More information   |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Farm Debt Mediation                             | Assistance for 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.   | Farm businesses   | Ongoing                                    | Call: 136 186<br>Email: <a href="mailto:farm.debt@ecodev.vic.gov.au">farm.debt@ecodev.vic.gov.au</a><br>Visit: <a href="http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/drought">www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/drought</a>  |
| Farm Risk Management Grants                     | Grants for farm businesses to develop a business plan and then implement identified infrastructure or skills needs to improve risk management practices and overall farm performance.  | Farm businesses   | Open 1 July 2016 until funds are expended. | DEDJTR Drought Information Line<br>Call: 136 186   |
| Stock Containment Area Program                  | Eligible farmers will receive financial assistance of up to \$2,000 for each stock containment area (SCA), with a maximum of three SCAs, or \$6,000 per farm property. Advice on the design and location of the SCA is available as well as information on livestock management, water quality and erosion management. | Livestock farmers in the Wimmera, North Central, Mallee, and Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (CMA) regions.<br>Additional eligible farmers in the West Wimmera, Horsham, Northern Grampians and Ararat shires located within the Glenelg Hopkins CMA boundary can now also access the program through the Glenelg Hopkins CMA. | Until funding is expended                  | Wimmera CMA<br>Call: 5382 1544<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.wcma.vic.gov.au">www.wcma.vic.gov.au</a><br>Mallee CMA<br>Call: 5051 4377<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.malleecma.vic.gov.au">www.malleecma.vic.gov.au</a><br>North Central CMA<br>Call: 5448 7124<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.nccma.vic.gov.au">www.nccma.vic.gov.au</a><br>Goulburn Broken CMA<br>Call: 5571 2526<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au">www.gbcma.vic.gov.au</a><br>Glenelg Hopkins CMA<br>Call: 5571 2526<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.ghcma.vic.gov.au">www.ghcma.vic.gov.au</a> |
| Climate Information tools and resources         | Targeted information for industry sectors, designed to provide farm businesses with the tools and resources to support risk management and good decision making.   | Farm businesses   | Ongoing                                    | Call: 136 186<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au">www.agriculture.vic.gov.au</a>   |
| Australian Government Farmer Assistance hotline | Assistance for drought affected farmers.   | Farm businesses   | Ongoing                                    | Farmer Assistance Hotline<br>Call: 132 316.  |
| Farm Management Deposits                        | Assists primary producers to deal more effectively with fluctuations in cash flows.  | Farm businesses   | Ongoing                                    | Visit: <a href="http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/assistance/fmd">www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/assistance/fmd</a>  |

## Small Business (non-farm) Support

| Initiative/ Service                                  | Description  | Eligibility/ Available to   | Timings                                  | More information  |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| Back to Work   | Supports employment growth in Victoria by providing financial assistance to employers who hire eligible unemployed or retrenched workers.  | Eligible Victorian businesses receive a Back to Work employer payment of up to \$2,000 when they hire an eligible job seeker. | Current scheme available to 30 June 2016 | Visit: <a href="http://backtowork.vic.gov.au">backtowork.vic.gov.au</a><br>Call the State Revenue Office on 13 21 61.   |
| Free business advice from an experienced mentor      | The Small Business Bus visits regional Victoria with free professional assistance from an information officer and specialist advice from an experienced mentor from the Small Business Mentoring Service.    | Small Businesses  | Ongoing                                  | Call Small Business Victoria: 13 22 15<br>Check the bus schedule<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.business.vic.gov.au/events/small-business-bus">www.business.vic.gov.au/events/small-business-bus</a> |
| Small Business Workshops                             | Low cost workshops and seminars providing small business owners and those planning to go into business with information, education and networking.   | Small Businesses  | Ongoing                                  | Call Small Business Victoria: 13 22 15<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.business.vic.gov.au">www.business.vic.gov.au</a>   |
| Dedicated Small Business Rural Financial Counselling | Free and independent financial information, options, decision support and referral services for small businesses in drought affected communities.  | Victorian Small Businesses that are located in the North West and Western Rural Financial Counselling Services regions        | Ongoing                                  | Visit: <a href="http://www.rfcs.gov.au">www.rfcs.gov.au</a><br>Call 1800 686 175 (toll free) or call<br>Western RFCS: 1300 735 578<br>North West RFCS: 1300 769 489                                 |
| Crisis Planning for Business workshops               | Workshops available in the drought affected area of north west Victoria. All workshop participants will receive a free one-on-one session with a business mentor experienced in crisis planning.             | Small Businesses  | Available to 30 June 2016                | Call Small Business Victoria: 13 22 15<br>Visit: <a href="http://www.business.vic.gov.au">www.business.vic.gov.au</a>   |
| Kindergarten Financial Hardship Grant                | One-off grants of up to \$10,000 will be available for eligible community based, not for profit kindergarten service providers to support the continued operation of drought affected kindergarten services. | Funded kindergartens  | Available for 2016 calendar year         | Department of Education and Training<br>North-Western regional office, Bendigo.<br>Call: 5400 3111<br>South-Western regional office, Ballarat<br>Call: 5337 8444                                    |

**General information on any drought related service or assistance is available from the Drought Information Line on 136 186 or at [www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/drought](http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/drought)**

**Each of the services or assistance programs in this guide has some accompanying contact details listed and this should be the first point of contact.**

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The information within this guide may be subject to change. Updates of this document can be accessed at [www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/drought](http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/drought) or if you do not have access to the internet, please call the Drought Information Line on 136 186.

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Drought related information is available in languages other than English. Anyone requiring help in understanding information in this guide should contact the Drought Information Line on 136 186.

If you would like to receive this information/publication in an accessible format (such as large print or audio) please call the Customer Service Centre on 136 186, TTY 1800 122 969, or email [customer.service@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:customer.service@ecodev.vic.gov.au).