



Resource directory: for Grampians fire- affected farmers

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SUPPORT FOR FIRE AFFECTED FARMERS

Farmers who have been impacted by the Grampians National Park – Yarram Gap Road bushfire event and have urgent animal welfare needs, please contact Agriculture Victoria on 1800 226 226.

For agriculture recovery assistance or advice, including technical decision-making support contact Agriculture Victoria at recovery@agriculture.vic.gov.au

FARM BUSINESS SUPPORT

Technical decision-making support, resources and events

Agriculture Victoria is working with impacted farmers to deliver technical information and decision-making support, including on recovery topics:

- Grazing, cropping and pasture management
- Soil erosion management
- Land management
- Animal health and nutrition
- Farm mapping and planning
- Water supply and quality
- Weed management

For information on technical support, contact Agriculture Victoria on 136 186 or email recovery@agriculture.vic.gov.au

For information about upcoming technical events visit the Agriculture Victoria website at agriculture.vic.gov.au/events

Farmers and service providers are encouraged to subscribe to the [Resilience and Recovery digital newsletter](#) to access latest events and information.

Managing immediate impacts

What to do after a bushfire

The Agriculture Victoria website has information about what to do on your farm after a bushfire, including: stock water, pasture recovery, finance and insurance, and carcass disposal. More information is available at [What to do after a bushfire](#) or visit agriculture.vic.gov.au and search for the page.

WorkSafe Victoria

The WorkSafe Victoria website has information about safe work practices on the farm including maintaining managing the risks associated with bushfire recovery and tips on working safely with chainsaws and other farm equipment

More information is available at www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

Fodder support – Lions Need for Feed

Lions Club of Victoria are running their Need for Feed project, supporting farmers and rural communities affected by bushfires and drought.

You can [apply for assistance](#) via their website to receive fodder support.

Wildlife impacted by natural disasters

Under Victorian emergency management arrangements, the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) is the lead agency for wildlife welfare arising from declared emergencies. Injured wildlife can be reported to the DEECA Customer Contact Centre on 136 186, via the Wildlife emergency app or by phone (download from Google Play or Apple Store) or by contacting Wildlife Victoria on 03 8400 7300.

Drought Support Package

Farmers who have also been impacted by drought, may be eligible for support through the Victorian Government's drought support package. The targeted support services focus on Local Government Areas in south west Victoria where conditions are most impacting farmers and communities: Glenelg, Southern Grampians, Warrnambool, Moyne, Corangamite, Colac Otway, Surf Coast, Ararat, Pyrenees, Golden Plains, Greater Geelong, as well as nominated postcodes in the southern half of West Wimmera Shire (primary production enterprises located in postcodes 3312, 3317, 3318, and 3319).

On-Farm Drought Infrastructure Grants Program

- Applications for the On-Farm Drought Infrastructure Grants Program are now open.
- The \$12.1 million Grants Program will support eligible primary producers to invest in on-farm infrastructure that improves drought management and preparedness.
- Eligible drought-affected farmers in Victoria's south west can now apply for up to \$5,000 (ex-GST) in co-contribution grants to support on-farm improvements such as:
 - Water infrastructure upgrades (pipes, tanks, troughs, dams),
 - Stock containment areas, and
 - Grain and fodder storage.
- Rural Finance is administering the program on behalf of the Victorian Government. Information on the guidelines, eligibility criteria, and the application process is available from Rural Finance at ruralfinance.com.au or by calling 1800 260 425 during business hours.
- The grants will be available until program funds are fully allocated.

A dedicated Regional Drought Coordinator

- The Regional Drought Coordinator is working with local councils, State Government departments, local water corporations, Catchment Management Authorities, local health services and industry service providers to ensure support is reaching the people that need it, when they need it. To contact the coordinator email drought.support@agriculture.vic.gov.au or call 136 186.

Funding for drought technical decision-making support

The drought technical decision-making support program consists of two main services:

- **One-on-one consultation with a farm advisor** consisting of a face-to-face consultation of up to 3 hours and a follow up phone consultation. Consultations will include the development of a Drought Management Action Plan to assist with decision making in the short, medium and long term.

Farmers can express their interest in the service using this link

<https://forms.office.com/r/481dUjXAkV>. To apply, farmers will need to show eligibility (farm address), their Australian Business Number (ABN) and their contact details for their preferred consultant to contact them.

Farmers are invited to indicate their preferred consultant from the list of consultants verified by Agriculture Victoria.

- **Boosted program of events for farmers** delivered by technical experts to provide advice and information to support decision-making. These events will be advertised on the Agriculture Victoria Website at agriculture.vic.gov.au/events

Rural Financial Counselling Service wellbeing counsellor

- Support to continue the work of the Rural Financial Counselling Service wellbeing counsellor to work directly with impacted families and tailor wellbeing supports to their individual needs. Details about how to access the service are on page 10.

Where can I get more information about the package?

- Information is available on the Agriculture Victoria website at agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons, by calling 136 186 or emailing drought.support@agriculture.vic.gov.au.

Feeding Livestock

The Feeding Livestock website hosts the Drought Feeding and Management of Beef Cattle and Sheep books, as well as many other resources, tools and links.

Beef Cattle Drought Feeding Booklet

The booklet is available as a word or a PDF version

<https://www.feedinglivestock.vic.gov.au/beef-resources/beef-cattle-drought-feeding-book/>



Figure 1: Drought Feeding Booklet for Cattle

Sheep Drought Feeding Booklet

The booklet is available as a word or a PDF version

<https://www.feedinglivestock.vic.gov.au/sheep-resources/sheep-drought-feeding-book/>



Figure 2: Drought Feeding Booklet for Sheep

Public land recovery

Recovering from the impacts of fires and floods on parks and forests is important. DEECA's role involves:

- rehabilitating and restoring the damage caused by fire control operations
- reopening our strategic road network and protecting it from erosion
- restoring forest and park infrastructure
- protecting water quality and supply
- protecting cultural heritage
- wildlife rescue
- helping other agencies with the recovery of the local community when a fire has affected the community's safety or economic or social well-being.

We try to reopen any closed areas as soon as possible. This may take some time. We may need to replace infrastructure or clear hazards such as falling trees to make the area safer.

Fences and control lines after bushfire

Landholders are expected to manage risks to their assets from the potential impact of bushfire. All landholders are expected to have appropriate levels of insurance cover for boundary and internal fences, in the same way any business venture or private householder should protect and insure their assets.

It is the responsibility of the owner of private land to fence their property and secure stock within their boundary.

DEECA has a policy about fences and fire control lines after bushfires.

- [Repair of rural fencing and fire control line and stabilisation policy \(PDF, 1.2 MB\)](#)
- [Repair of rural fencing and fire control line and stabilisation policy \(DOCX, 1.7 MB\)](#)

Some landholders that have boundaries alongside national parks, state parks or state forests may be eligible for assistance following bushfire.



Under its bushfire recovery policy, the Victorian Government will assist with fencing repair and replacement by paying half the cost of materials to repair or replace bushfire damaged fencing of agricultural land bordering national parks, State parks and State forests to its pre-existing standard.

Under this policy, half the costs of materials up to a maximum of \$5000 per km is funded. Payment will consider the type of fence being replaced. This includes fences damaged by a backburn which are treated the same as damage by bushfire. Labour costs are to be met by the landholder. This policy is managed by Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic).

Internal fences burnt by bushfire is not covered under this policy. Landholders are responsible for internal fences on private land.

Where fences (boundary and internal) have been damaged by firefighters either by machinery or cutting of the fence to gain access, FFMVic will fully cover the cost of repair or replacement of the damaged section of the fence to the pre-existing standard.

To find out whether you are eligible:

- For fires that start on public or crown land, [contact us](#).
- For fires that start on private land, contact your local [CFA District Operations Manager](#).

Essential water replacement after bushfire

This scheme helps to relieve hardship in the community by replenishing essential private water supplies that have been used by fire services during bushfire emergencies.

The Victorian Government has a policy regarding replacing essential water used during bushfire fighting operations.

- [Essential water policy \(PDF, 461.5 KB\)](#)
- [Essential water policy \(accessible\) \(DOCX, 860.5 KB\)](#)

CFA and Forest Fire Management firefighters have the legislative powers to take water from any waterway or water source for firefighting purposes.

The water owner can request replacement of essential water under this scheme.

The water replacement scheme recognises that, while farmers understand the urgency of firefighting, their basic water interests have to be protected too.

If taken for firefighting purposes, a reasonable and sufficient volume of essential water will be provided to sustain the:

- health of affected residences and pets
- health and productivity of stock

To lodge a request for essential water replacement, download and complete the Essential Water Replacement form, then email it to Emergency.recovery@deeca.vic.gov.au.

- [Essential water replacement form \(PDF, 206.3 KB\)](#)
- [Essential water replacement form \(accessible\) \(DOCX, 57.1 KB\)](#)

Your local council, DEECA or CFA Office can assist you with lodgement if required.

Essential Water Replacement requests must be submitted within 3 months of the essential water being taken for bushfire fighting operations.

Farm water

Summer Water Calculator

Use the summer calculator to check water levels in your dams and tanks and to estimate how long water for stock will last.

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/prepare/tools-and-calculators/summer-water-calculator>

Features include:

- No login required, mobile friendly
- Calculates automatically
- You can select different dam shapes plus name dams and tanks
- Accounts for batter slope and average summer evaporation rates
- Delivers estimate of useable water - you can allow for sludge
- Help information available on every page
- Export a PDF summary of your current available water - print or email



Figure 3: Summer Water Calculator

Measuring the depth of your dam

Watch this short video to measure the depth of your dam

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kp21tB5hPj8&t=3s>



Figure 4: Dam Deep instructional video

Farm Water Calculator

This tool has been developed to assist with planning on farm water supplies.

The figures and formulas used are based upon best science at this time. But, due to the variable nature of water and the assumptions contained within the science, these figures should be used as a guide only.

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/prepare/tools-and-calculators/farm-water-calculator>



Figure 5: Annual Farm Water Calculator

Managing water in stock containment

A stock containment area consists of one or more small yards where stock are confined during periods of drought, natural disasters and other emergencies.

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/water/managing-dams/water-supply-in-stock-containment-areas>



Figure 8: Managing water supplies in Stock Containment Areas

Rural Financial Counselling Service

The Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) offers free, confidential and independent financial information, options, decision-making support and referral services to farmers and small, related rural businesses who are in, or at risk of, financial hardship.

A Rural Financial Counsellor can visit farmers at their place of business or residence and can assist with business planning, creditor negotiation, cash flow management, accessing government and industry support programs and referrals to other professional services.

Contact the RFCS service for south west Victoria:

RFCS Victoria West

Phone: 1300 735 578

Email: admin@wswrcs.com.au

Website: wswrcs.com.au

or connect with your closest service by calling 1300 771 741 or visiting rfcsnetwork.com.au.

Farm Household Allowance

Farmers in financial hardship may be eligible for the Commonwealth Government's **Farm Household Allowance (FHA)**, a fortnightly payment available for up to four years in a specific 10-year period.

More information on the Farm Household Allowance is available at servicesaustralia.gov.au and search for 'Farm Household Assistance' or by calling the Farmer Assistance Hotline on 132 316.

A rural financial counsellor can help farmers to understand eligibility and apply.

Local council rates – hardship assistance

If you are having difficulty paying your rates, contact your local council to see what hardship assistance they can offer.

The sooner you contact them the better.

When speaking to your local council officer, find out about:

- available hardship assistance,
- if you are eligible for any rate concessions, and
- what type of assistance is best for you.

More information is available from the National Debt Helpline on 1800 007 007 or visit [National Debt Helpline](#).

Find the contact details of your local council [here](#).

Liquor Licence assistance

If you hold a liquor licence associated with your farm business and you are affected by hardship and/or natural disaster, you may request a waiver of your Liquor Licence renewal fee. Complete the fee waiver application on the Liquor Control Victoria website: [Reduce or waive liquor licence renewal fee | vic.gov.au](#)

Regional Investment Corporation

Farmers may be able to access low-interest loans through the Commonwealth Government's [Regional Investment Corporation \(RIC\)](#). A RIC loan is a partnership between the farm business, a commercial lender and the Regional Investment Corporation. Available loans include:

- the [Farm Investment Loan](#) is used to 'recover from severe business impact and prepare for future financial disruptions'; it can be used to refinance your debt, pay your operating expenses and enhance your productivity.
- the [Drought Loan](#) is used to 'help prepare for, manage through, and recover from drought'; it can be used to refinance certain debt, pay outstanding bills, pay for fodder or carting water, and contribute to the cost of drought recovery.

The information here is current at the time of publication.

Complete and up-to-date information about low interest RIC loans, the application process, eligibility, and terms and conditions is available from the Regional Investment Corporation.

Call **1800 875 675**, email info@ric.gov.au or visit ric.gov.au.

Farmer Assistance Hotline

Contact the Farmer Assistance Hotline on **132 316** to find out about Australian Government support services available to farmers and rural communities.

Business Victoria

The [Business Victoria website](#) has information and resources to support businesses including currently available [grants and programs](#). Visit business.vic.gov.au.

PERSONAL WELLBEING SUPPORT



To access a full listing of supports available on the Agriculture Victoria website, scan the QR code.

National Centre for Farmer Health

The National Centre for Farmer Health is supporting primary producers through the delivery of initiatives to boost farmer mental health and wellbeing, including:

- Distribution of mental health resources and support information
- ['Managing Stress on the Farm'](#) book explores the common causes of stressors on farms and offers practical ways to deal with them. It also includes the Steering Straight plan, to help individuals manage their mental health with practical, useful steps.

Visit the [NCFH Support Hub](#) for a range of mental health resources and information tailored for Victorian farmers and agricultural communities.

More information is available on the <https://farmerhealth.org.au/support-hub-victoria>

Rural Financial Counselling Service Victoria West – wellbeing support

The RFCS Victoria West offers wellbeing support to help with mental stresses resulting from financial issues, and can help farmers and small business owners to:

- Develop strategies to cope with stress
- Recognise signs of poor health in themselves and/or their workers
- Set up a support network within family/friends/community
- Identify groups/activities within the community that can help
- Access health services through referrals.

If you're interested in speaking with a wellbeing counsellor, please contact RFCS Victoria West on 1300 735 578 or go to www.rfcs.com.au/wellbeing

GPs and community health care providers

If in need of support during difficult times, visit your local Doctor (GP).

Community health services also provide a range of primary health care services that could include acute hospital care, medical centre, home and community care, district nursing, women's health, allied health services (podiatry, occupational therapy etc.), counselling, pharmacy, referrals. Contact your GP or local Community Health service.

Rural Flying Doctor Service – Flying Doctor Wellbeing

Flying Doctor Wellbeing is a free mental health and wellbeing service for people in some rural and remote Victorian communities.

More information is available at [Flying Doctor Wellbeing](#)

Contacts: email wellbeing@rfd.vic.gov.au or call (03) 8412 0480

Personal wellbeing contacts

National Centre for Farmer Health	Support resources and services for emotional and social wellbeing, farm business support, information for rural and health professionals, rural support organisations.	(03) 5551 8533 farmerhealth.org.au
RFCS Victoria West – wellbeing support	Wellbeing support to help with mental stresses resulting from financial issues.	1300 735 578 www.rcswcs.com.au/wellbeing
PHN Western Victoria	The Western Victoria Primary Health Network commissions qualified and experienced health providers to deliver mental health support and care for people throughout the region.	westvicphn.com.au/for-the-community/mental-health-support/
Australian Red Cross	For people affected by the bushfire in the Grampians.	1800 733 276 redcross.org.au/
Lifeline	24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services.	131 114 lifeline.org.au
Beyond Blue	24/7 telephone information and support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health.	1300 224 636 beyondblue.org.au
MensLine Australia	24/7 service for men with relationship and family concerns.	1300 78 99 78 mensline.org.au
Family Relationship Service	Providing families with access to information about family relationship issues.	1800 050 321 familyrelationships.gov.au
Mental Health Care Plan	Provides Medicare rebates for up to 10 individual or 10 group appointments per year with a psychologist, occupational therapist or social worker.	Contact your GP for a referral healthdirect.gov.au/mental-health-care-plan

Kids Helpline	Confidential telephone counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25.	1800 551 800 kidshelpline.com.au/
Parentline	Counselling and information for families with children up to 18 years. Open 8am to midnight, seven days.	132 289 parentline.com.au/
NURSE-ON-CALL	Expert health information and advice (14 hours, 7 days)	1300 60 60 24
Rural Aid	Rural Aid offers free, confidential counselling to Rural Aid registered farmers and their families. Rural Aid also provides critical support to farmers affected by natural disaster through financial, water, fodder and volunteer assistance.	1300 327 624 contact@ruralaid.org.au www.ruralaid.org.au/
Better Health Channel	Health and medical information that is quality assured, reliable, up to date, easy to understand, regularly reviewed and locally relevant.	betterhealth.vic.gov.au

GOVERNMENT AND AGENCY CONTACTS

Agriculture Victoria		
Agriculture Services	The Agriculture Services team works with farmers and industry to prepare for and manage drought and dry seasonal conditions by delivering tailored services and support.	136 186 recovery@agriculture.vic.gov.au
Technical information	The Agriculture Victoria website has a wide of range of information and guidance on issues such as animal welfare, drought planning, assessing pasture resources, measuring feed on offer, stock containment areas and tools for making rations.	www.agriculture.vic.gov.au
Business support		
Business Victoria	The Business Victoria website has information and resources to support businesses including currently available grants and programs.	business.vic.gov.au

Local Government

Local Councils

Find contact details for your local shire council.

www.vic.gov.au/know-your-council

Water corporations and services

Fifteen water corporations provide water supply (including recycled water) and sewerage and trade waste disposal services to customers throughout Victoria.

Find your local water corporation by visiting:

<https://www.water.vic.gov.au/for-households/find-your-water-corporation>.



Catchment Management Authorities

Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) are responsible for the integrated planning and coordination of land, water and biodiversity management in each catchment and land protection regions. These 10 authorities have the lead role in developing and delivering regional programs for waterway management.

Find the contact information for your local CMA by visiting:

<https://viccatchments.com.au/contact-us/>.

