



Farming and Community Group Drought Funding:

Technical expertise for managing
and building preparedness for drought
and dry seasonal conditions.

2020 Program Guidelines

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

Published by Agriculture Victoria, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, 1 Spring Street Melbourne, Victoria 3000
March 2020

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For further information about Drought and Dry Seasonal Conditions go to www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons,
email Drought.Support@agriculture.vic.gov.au or call the Customer Service Centre on 136 186.



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About the Program

The Victorian Government's Drought Support Program provides targeted support to Victorian farm businesses to increase skills and technical knowledge and to support decision-making during drought and dry seasonal conditions.

The Farming and Community Group Drought Funding Program, is delivered by Agriculture Victoria under the Victorian Government Drought Support Program and will enable farmers to better prepare, respond and build resilience to drought and dry seasonal conditions.

The Program is open to Landcare and land management groups, industry groups, farming systems groups, farming discussion groups and not for profit and community organisations in Victoria.

Preference will be given to projects that are in Wellington or East Gippsland shires, far North-West Victoria (Millewa and surrounds) and the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District (GMID).

Groups will be able to engage technical experts and/or specialists to deliver timely, relevant and appropriate technical information to assist dryland and irrigated farm businesses and landholders to plan or manage the impacts of drought and dry seasonal conditions.

Objectives

The Program will:

- Identify technical knowledge or capability gaps relating to drought and dry seasonal conditions
- Increase and strengthen farmers' technical knowledge and capability, enabling farm businesses and landholders to be more prepared and responsive to drought and dry seasonal conditions
- Encourage farm business and landholders to share and collaborate, thereby increasing skills knowledge and capacity, preparedness and responsiveness to drought and dry seasonal conditions.

Program dates

- Grant applications will open on **13 March 2020** and close **1 April 2020** at 11.59 pm
- Activities must be completed no later than **14 June 2020**
- Evaluation, expenditure report, invoices, statutory declaration and, final report must be submitted to the department no later than **21 June 2020**.



Funding and technical themes

Grants of up to \$25,000 (excluding GST) are available to engage technical experts and/or specialists to provide relevant and appropriate technical advice, information and support to a group of farmers or landholders to help them prepare for, respond to and manage drought and dry seasonal conditions.

This can include, but is not limited to the following technical themes:

- Irrigation and water
- Livestock management, including animal nutrition, health, feed and water budgeting
- Crop, pasture and grazing establishment and management
- Land and soil management
- Stock containment area use and management
- Whole farm and business planning
- Climate adaptation
- Other targeted themes will be considered on a case by case basis.

Project specifications

- The maximum value of funding available to eligible groups is \$25,000 (excluding GST) by exception is a registered association or not for profit organisation who may auspice a project(s) on behalf of group(s)
- It is expected that applicants applying for the full value of \$25,000 will be delivering multiple events and must demonstrate the value of these to the state
- Groups can apply for one or more activities per project funding application, however multiple activities should engage different target audiences or be held in different regions
- The project can complement other existing activities and services for example an existing producer group
- An activity may include (but is not limited to) technical workshops, seminars, farm field visit or information sessions
- Activities may be delivered over one or multiple days using the same service provider
- Each activity should engage a minimum of 20 farmers/landholders. Smaller groups will be considered on a case by case basis
- Activities should be made available to participants beyond the membership of an existing or ongoing group.



Applicant eligibility

Eligible Victorian groups include:

- Landcare and land management groups (for example, Landcare Network)
- Farmer discussion and producer groups
- Not for profit and community organisations (including incorporated bodies, cooperatives or associations, (for example, agribusiness groups, development associations).

Note: Individual farm businesses, landholders, service providers and consultants are encouraged to contact and collaborate with their local group or network in development and submission of an application by an eligible group.

Applications are encouraged from across Victoria however preference will be given to projects in the Wellington and East Gippsland shires, in far North-West Victoria (Millewa and surrounding areas¹) and the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District (GMID)²:

In order to apply, applicants must:

1. Have a current Australian Business Number (ABN)
2. Be registered as a business in Victoria
3. Have a Victorian business address
4. Be a legal entity³
5. Meet all industrial relation obligations as an employer in accordance with the National Employment Standards
6. If applicable, projects that have received (or are approved to receive) funding from a third-party funding source to support activity(ies) must provide details in writing
7. Provide relevant business information on the project, including costs
8. Declare freedom from any conflicts of interest by the applicant and/or service provider in writing.

Projects will not progress to the formal assessment process if the applicant eligibility criteria are not met.

¹ This incorporates the towns and locality areas of Carwarp, Cullulleraine, Lindsay Point, Meringur, Merrinee, Neds Corner, Wargan and Werrimull

² This incorporates the shires of Campaspe, Gannawarra, Greater Shepparton City, Loddon, Moira and Swan Hill Rural City

³ A legal entity is an association, corporation, trustee of a trust, or individual that has legal standing in the eyes of the law. A legal entity has legal capacity to enter into agreements or contracts, assume obligations, incur and pay debts, sue and be sued in its own right, and to be held responsible for its actions.



Eligible expenditure

Grant funding must clearly align with the objectives of the program and may be used for the following:

- Fee for service of technical experts, facilitators, presenters and speakers who will provide sound and evidence-based technical advice at activities
- Expenses associated with the evaluation and reporting of the funded activity(ies) such as data on activity, number of attendees, outputs, outcomes and learnings
- Travel expenses for the technical expert which adhere with the Australian Taxation Office [business allowances](#)
- Activity operating costs (for example group bus and venue hire, planning and running costs).
 - Venue hire and catering costs (excluding alcohol) will be capped at \$2000 per application
 - Event promotion and advertising will be capped at \$1500 per application

Note: Recipients will be reimbursed for actual project costs upon the provision of itemised invoices.

Not eligible

- Fees for services provided by State and Commonwealth government employees who present or facilitate at events
- Applicants who have applied for another state government grant for the same project
- Applicants and activities not based in Victoria
- Projects, activities or purchases undertaken prior to approval of the Grant Agreement
- Subsidising attendance at conferences or annual memberships fees
- Purchase, subscription or promotion of any commercial products, programs, apps or insurance products (for example multi-peril insurance)
- A project or activity which does not improve farm businesses or landholder preparedness and responsiveness to manage drought and dry seasonal conditions
- There are no practical outcomes to farm businesses or landholders in Victoria
- No demand or a need from the group for the proposed activities
- Purchase of any infrastructure or capital items (for example, fencing, equipment, vehicles or associated costs)
- Group administration, legal or insurance costs
- Groups and facilitators may not charge participants for attendance/participation.



Assessment criteria

Eligible applications will be competitively assessed against the following criteria:

- The capability and expertise of the applicant to deliver the activity within budget and scope, identifying project risks and mitigation strategies
- The capability and expertise of the technical expert/service provider to deliver sound and evidence based technical advice and information
- Identification of new or improved knowledge and skills to assist the region and industry to be better prepared and responsive to drought and dry seasonal conditions
- The rigor of the project design (including evaluation incorporating “before” and “after” analysis of relevant production, economic and environmental measures)
- Maximising value to the state including reach or extent of engagement and impact/outcomes of the activity.

Supporting material and authorisation

Please provide the following information to support your application – a maximum of eight documents can be uploaded including:

- Detailed budget
- Itemised quotes that include the supplier’s business details and ABN
- Documentation outlining and supporting the proposed project, for example a feasibility study, a letter of support from applicants’ group or industry etc
- Be able to address at least one technical theme stated in the guidelines (page 4).
- Applications must be signed by the group’s authorised signatory, typically the most senior authority in the group such as Chief Executive Officer, Chairperson, Group Leader.

Please ensure all relevant documents are provided, applications will be assessed on documentation that is provided at the time of submission.



Application and assessment process

- Applications must be submitted online on the Agriculture Victoria website at agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons
- Applicants should collaborate with a technical expert to plan the application
- Applications will undergo eligibility checks
- Eligible applications will be assessed against the assessment criteria by a panel of representatives from the department
- Applications that rank highest against both the assessment criteria and other applications will be offered funding
- Applicants will be advised of outcomes as soon as possible after the closing date
- Applications received after the closing date will not be considered
- Successful applicants will receive a letter of offer and are required to enter into a Grant Agreement to receive funding
- Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing and feedback provided, upon request.



Grant Agreement and conditions

Successful applicants must sign a Grant Agreement that includes a standard set of terms and conditions and project-specific obligations. The department will enter into one Grant Agreement per successful application.

A proposed variation or extension to the project plan, timeframe or budget must be approved by the department.

Successful applicants must:

- Operate public liability insurance
- Complete activities no later than 14 June 2020 unless otherwise approved by the department
- Collect, collate and report on participant registration and evaluation as per the pro-forma supplied by Agriculture Victoria for each activity at the time of activity or last day of a series of activities
- All evaluation, final reporting and invoices must be submitted to the department no later than 21 June 2020
- Agriculture Victoria requires recognition in predominate branding and presence in promotion of and during the activity with the opportunity for Agriculture Victoria to promote Drought and Dry Seasonal Conditions support.
- All expenditure is to be incurred only after execution of the Grant Agreement (once the Grant Agreement has been signed by the department and returned to the applicant). Grants will not be provided for retrospective activities (activities that occur prior to the executed Grant Agreement).

Payment will be made by the department to the grant recipient following the submission of:

- Copy of tax invoice from the service provider for the activity design, delivery and reporting including associated travel
- Copies of invoices for operating costs including group bus hire, catering, venue hire, planning and running costs
- A tax invoice from the applicant for paid goods and services and a statutory declaration indicating that costs have been incurred
- Payment will be made via electronic funds transfer to a nominated bank account and may take up to four weeks to process.



Publicity

Grant recipients are required to assist the department in promotion of the Drought and Dry Seasonal Conditions Support Program. This may include provision of presentations on the Dry Seasonal Conditions Program, involvement in media releases, case studies or promotional events and activities.

The department may request recipients to fact check any text and seek approval to use any owned imagery associated with the project prior to the publication of any such promotional materials.

The department may use images taken of program participants for publicity purposes.

Recipients must not make any public announcement or issue any press release regarding the receipt of a grant without prior written approval from the department.

The department may include the name of the recipient and/or grant amount in any publicity material and in the department's annual report.

If requested by the department, the recipient must ensure that the State's support for the grant is acknowledged on all promotional materials and appropriate signage, consistent with the Guidelines for Victorian Government Advertising and Communications (available at www.dpc.vic.gov.au) or as otherwise specified by the department.

Privacy statement

Any personal information provided by the applicant in an application will be collected by the department for the purpose of program administration. This information may be provided to other Victorian Government bodies for the purposes of assessing applications. If confidential personal information about third parties is included in an application, applicants are required to ensure that the third party is aware of the contents of this Privacy Statement.

Any personal information collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred will be held in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)* and other applicable laws.

The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. The department's Privacy Policy can be found online at <https://djpr.vic.gov.au/privacy>. Enquiries about access to information should be directed to Agriculture Victoria by phone on 136 186 or to the Department's Privacy Unit by email privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au.



agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons