



Pasture Recovery and Management Grant Program

Program Guidelines



RURAL FINANCE

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

PASTURE RECOVERY AND MANAGEMENT GRANT PROGRAM PROGRAM GUIDELINES

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Victorian Government has established the Pasture Recovery and Management Grant Program (the Program) for farm businesses to implement approaches to assist in the recovery and restoration of severely impacted non-irrigated pastures due to extended drought conditions.

A grant of up to \$5,000 (ex-GST) per farm business is available to assist eligible farm businesses implement pasture restoration and other land management activities that may aid in pasture recovery. Eligible farm businesses are required to provide at least dollar for dollar matching funding co-contribution.

The program is available to eligible farm businesses located in East Gippsland and Wellington Shires.

The program is a key component of the increased drought assistance being provided to Victorian farmers.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

The Pasture Recovery and Management Grant Program will assist farmers undertake pasture recovery and restoration activities to:

- Help manage the farm property in the current drought conditions
- Support the long-term viability of the farm
- Minimise further damage to pasture and soil
- Help prevent soil and nutrient losses and environmental impacts
- Re-establish or improve on-farm feed supply.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Eligible activities include:

- Pasture restoration (e.g. associated seed and fertilizer costs)
- Establishment of ground cover (e.g. fodder crops) as a remedial action before pastures can be established
- Planting of shelter belts for wind breaks and associated fencing for protecting existing and new pasture
- Desilting works of existing stock and domestic dams, where you can demonstrate that contamination has occurred as a result of wind erosion and where works include measures to prevent future occurrences
- Items to construct a new or upgrade an existing Stock Containment Area (SCA) – such as fencing, gates, troughs, piping, tanks, pumps and livestock feeders
- Mechanical seeding (e.g. hire or purchase of seeding machines, roller)
- Soil testing
- Professional advice to undertake a pasture restoration plan
- Costs associated with professional services and contractors used for pasture restoration works (e.g. cultivation and resowing, direct drilling, smudging or heavy harrowing, rolling, etc.).

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Activities and expenses not eligible for the grant include (but are not limited to):

- Restoration activities related to irrigated pastures
- Standard variable inputs for normal operations (e.g. water, fodder or grain purchase costs, hay production) or non-livestock parts of the business (e.g. grain production).
- On-farm infrastructure not specified as eligible activities or other types of infrastructure that do not relate to pasture improvements or management
- Wages for your employees or your self-assessed labor or transport costs
- Training costs
- Replacing or maintenance of existing agricultural machinery and equipment (e.g. tractors)
- Purchase, lease or acquisition of land
- Purchase, lease or maintenance of transportation
- Vehicles (e.g. cars, motorbikes, quadbikes, quadbike safety devices, trailers and trucks)
- Utilities and operating costs of the business (e.g. gas, electricity, rates)
- Purchase of livestock
- Standard boundary or house fencing
- Pre-existing annual fees
- Administration, legal or insurance costs
- Activities that will not be completed by 30 September 2019.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Eligible participants are required to:

- a. Own, share or lease farm businesses located in East Gippsland or Wellington shires.
- b. Be registered as a primary producer with the Australian Tax Office and have an ABN and be registered for GST.
- c. Have a right or interest in the land for the purpose of primary production.
- d. Contribute a significant part (more than 51 per cent) of his/her labour to the farming enterprise.¹
- e. Derive 51 per cent of gross annual income from the farm business OR made a minimum farm related capital investment of \$50,000 (excluding land purchase) in the farm business.

You primarily undertake livestock production as the main component of your farming business and the pasture is used to feed animals. (As an estimate only - you would have more than 50 per cent livestock mix on either a land or income basis under normal conditions.)

You can demonstrate that your non-irrigated pastures have been significantly impacted as a result of drought.

You have purchased or undertaken the eligible activities on or after the 1 January 2019.

Sign a Statutory Declaration that you meet the eligibility of the Program. Businesses may be asked to produce evidence, such as financial statements, to validate eligibility.

Rural Finance, in consultation with the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) may audit successful applicants throughout the life of the Program.

The minimum value of a grant to eligible applicants is \$1,000 (ex-GST). The maximum is \$5,000 (ex-GST). Eligible farm businesses are required to match the grant amount approved with at least dollar for dollar matching co-contribution.

One grant will be offered per applicant. An applicant who operates more than one farm business may only apply for a grant for one of their businesses.

Applicants that have received, have in-principle approval or intend to apply for a Victorian Government On-Farm Drought Infrastructure Support Grant are also eligible to apply for the Program subject to meeting the Scheme eligibility requirements. The same activity cannot be funded under both programs. Approval for the On-Farm Drought Infrastructure Support Grants does not guarantee eligibility for this Scheme.

Where activities can normally be funded through other Commonwealth Government and state programs they will not be funded through the Pasture Recovery and Management Grant Program.

Activities or items that have received (or are approved to receive) funding from another source will be ineligible for funding under this program.

¹ As a guide it is anticipated that farm turnover would exceed \$50,000 per annum under normal business conditions to be considered a bona-fide commercial scale farm business.

Normal business conditions refer to a year with no adverse climatic conditions (drought) in which average yields/productivity is achieved. Normal year income is based on this productivity and long term achievable commodity prices.

APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Applications for the Pasture Recovery and Management Grant Program will be processed in order of receipt.

Activities that have already been undertaken and paid since 1 January 2019.	Proposed activities
<p>Complete application form including supplying all supporting documentation.</p>	<p>Complete application form including supplying all supporting documentation.</p>
<p>Applicants are required to supply tax invoices and receipts for all claims and photos of the completed activity (or other evidence).</p>	<p>Applicants are required to supply a quotation for the proposed activity.</p>
<p>Approval or rejection of the application will be communicated to the applicant.</p>	<p>'In-principle' approval or rejection of the application will be communicated to the applicant.</p>
<p>On approval, payment of the approved amount will be arranged and processed as soon as possible via electronic funds transfer to the applicant's nominated account.</p>	<p>On receiving written 'in-principle' approval, applicants are required to make the purchase within three months of the date of approval.</p>
	<p>On completion, grant recipients are required to forward paid tax invoices/s for all claims and photos of completed activity (or other evidence) to Rural Finance. The grant recipient must pay for the project and/or activity initially and then Rural Finance will forward payment of the grant amount on completion.</p>
	<p>Payment of the approved amount will be arranged and processed as soon as possible via electronic funds transfer to the applicant's nominated account.</p>

GUIDANCE FOR PASTURE RESTORATION DECISION MAKING

Pasture information can be found on the Agriculture Victoria website: agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/pastures

Information about grazing management systems can be found on the Agriculture Victoria website: agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/land-health/grazing-management-systems

Agriculture Victoria is conducting workshops to support farmers to manage the impacts of drought. To find out more about the workshops available please visit: agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/farmer-workshops

Fact sheets about farm management practices during drought can be found on the Agriculture Victoria website: agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/drought/managing-resources-in-drought

Information about managing farm dams can be found on the Agriculture Victoria website: agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/managing-dams

Agriculture Victoria staff at the Bairnsdale Office can be contacted on (03) 5152 0600.

FUNDING SOURCE

The Victorian Government is providing increased support to assist farmers impacted by drought and dry conditions. The Government is providing \$2 million for the Pasture Recovery and Management Grant Program.

DURATION OF THE PROGRAM

The application period for grants will be open from the date the Program opens until 30 June 2019 unless all available funds are fully committed beforehand.

REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

DJPR may review and amend the grants program at any time.

EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

The Victorian Government may conduct an evaluation to determine the extent to which the Pasture Recovery and Management Grant Program has contributed to Victorian Government policy objectives. Grant recipients may be requested to provide information to assist in auditing during the program or the evaluation after the program's completion.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Rural Finance

Telephone: 1800 260 425

Email: governmentservices@ruralfinance.com.au

Web: ruralfinance.com.au

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

Agriculture Victoria

For more information about other drought support being provided by the Victorian Government and Commonwealth Government, please contact Agriculture Victoria.

A range of other support is available to farmers affected by the drought and potential applicants are strongly encouraged to participate in these programs.

Telephone: 136 186

Email: drought.support@ecodev.vic.gov.au

Web: agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons

PUBLICITY

Grant recipients may be asked to assist Agriculture Victoria in promotion of the Program. This may include involvement in media releases, case studies or promotional events and activities.

Agriculture Victoria may request recipients to fact check any text and seek all relevant approvals in order for Agriculture Victoria to use any imagery provided by the recipient associated with the Program prior to the publication of any such promotional materials.

Agriculture Victoria may publicise the benefits accruing to the recipient and/or the State of Victoria associated with the provision of a Pasture Recovery and Management Program grant.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any personal information provided by the Applicant or a third party in an application will be collected by Rural Finance and Agriculture Victoria for the purpose of administration of the Program. This information may be provided to other Victorian Government bodies for the purposes of assessing Pasture Recovery and Management Grant Program applications.

Data gathered through assessments may be compiled, aggregated and made anonymous by Rural Finance and Agriculture Victoria for Program reporting, evaluation and research purposes.

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.

Agriculture Victoria is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. Agriculture Victoria's Privacy Policy can be found online at economicdevelopment.vic.gov.au. Enquiries about access to information should be directed to the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions' Privacy Unit by phone on (03) 9651 9749 or email privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au.