


**2019**

Drought  
Support  
Services  
in Central  
and East  
Gippsland

**AGRICULTURE VICTORIA**





A guide for individuals,  
farm families and businesses  
affected by drought and dry  
seasonal conditions.

Updated June 2019 to include all the Victorian and Federal  
Government's Drought Support initiatives.

# Financial and Family Support

Initiative / Service	Description	Eligibility / Available to	Timeframe	Contact information
<b>Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS)</b>	Free and independent financial information, options, decision support and referral services.	Farmers, fishing enterprises, forest growers and harvesters and related small businesses.	Ongoing	Call: Eastern RFCS 1300 045 747 Offices located in Bairnsdale, Maffra Leongatha and Ellinbank. Visit: <a href="http://www.ruralfinancialcounselling.org.au">www.ruralfinancialcounselling.org.au</a>
<b>Australian Government Farmer Assistance Hotline</b>	A phone service for farmers and their partners to talk about and discuss the Farm Household Allowance.	Farm businesses.	Ongoing	Call: 13 23 16 Visit: <a href="http://www.humanservices.gov.au">www.humanservices.gov.au</a>
<b>Farm Household Allowance</b>	A payment to farming families in financial hardship.	Eligible farm families.	Ongoing	Call: 13 23 16 Visit: <a href="http://www.humanservices.gov.au">www.humanservices.gov.au</a>
<b>Victorian State Concessions and Benefits</b>	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.  If you are not a concession card holder, you may still be eligible. Check with the department's website or Info line for more information.	Ongoing	Call: 1800 658 521 Visit: <a href="https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/concessions-and-benefits">https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/concessions-and-benefits</a>
<b>Salvation Army</b>	Material or financial assistance for families.	Individuals and families.	Ongoing	Call: 13 72 58 Visit: <a href="http://www.salvationarmy.org.au">www.salvationarmy.org.au</a>
<b>Australian Tax Office</b>	Tax advice for drought affected tax payers.	Individuals and families.	Ongoing	Call: 1800 806 218 Visit: <a href="http://www.ato.gov.au/drought">www.ato.gov.au/drought</a>
<b>Foodbank Victoria</b>	Distributes meals to individuals and families across regional, rural and metro areas of Victoria.	Individuals and families.	Ongoing	Call: (03) 9362 8300 Visit: <a href="http://www.foodbank.org.au">www.foodbank.org.au</a>
<b>Catchment Management Authorities (CMA) Drought Employment Program</b>	Farmers, farm workers and individuals affected by drought may apply for off-farm employment and training opportunities.	Farmers, farm workers and individuals residing in the municipalities of Wellington and East Gippsland through the East Gippsland, West Gippsland and North East CMA's.	Until funding expended	East Gippsland CMA Call: (03) 5152 0600 Email: <a href="mailto:egcma@egcma.com.au">egcma@egcma.com.au</a> Visit: <a href="http://www.egcma.com.au">www.egcma.com.au</a>
<b>Back to School Support</b>	Assists families with the cost of uniforms, shoes and other items for students in government schools.	Families.	Ongoing	Contact your child's school in the first instance. Visit: <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au">www.education.vic.gov.au</a>
<b>Kindergarten Support</b>	Families that reside in or attend kindergarten in specified drought affected areas are eligible for 15 hours per week of free kindergarten in the year before school.	Families residing in or attending kindergarten in the municipalities of Wellington and East Gippsland.	Available for the 2019 calendar year	Call: 1300 338 738 (South Eastern Victoria) Visit: <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au">www.education.vic.gov.au</a>
<b>Kindergarten Support Grant</b>	Kindergartens can apply for a one-off grant to support their continued operation.	Community-based kindergartens in the municipalities of Wellington and East Gippsland.	Available for the 2019 calendar year	Call: 1300 338 738 (South Eastern Victoria) Visit: <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au">www.education.vic.gov.au</a>
<b>Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) – drought assistance</b>	Available to primary and secondary school students in specified areas that are currently attending a Victorian government or non-government school.	Families residing in the municipalities of Wellington and East Gippsland.	Available for the 2019 calendar year	Contact your child's school in the first instance. Visit: <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au">www.education.vic.gov.au</a>

# Farm Business Support

Initiative / Service	Description	Eligibility / Available to	Timeframe	Contact information
<b>One-on-one consultation sessions</b>	Individual support from Agriculture Victoria to provide advice and information on a range of drought support services.	Farm businesses in the municipalities of Wellington and East Gippsland.	Ongoing	Call: 136 186  Livestock: Darren Hickey (03) 5152 0496 Dairy: Maria Rose (03) 5147 0843 or David Shambrook (03) 5662 9913 Irrigation: Janice Dowe (03) 5147 0854  Visit: <a href="http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons">www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons</a>
<b>Technical and decision-making support for farm businesses</b>	Workshops for farmers to help them make informed decisions and manage dry conditions.	Farm businesses.	Ongoing	Call: 136 186 Visit: <a href="http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons">www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons</a>
<b>Farm Business Assistance Program</b>	A program to provide a one-off support payment to eligible farm businesses.	Eligible farm businesses in the municipalities of Wellington and East Gippsland.	Until funding expended	Call: 1800 260 425 Visit: <a href="http://www.ruralfinance.com.au">www.ruralfinance.com.au</a>
<b>On-Farm Drought Infrastructure Support Grants</b>	Grants of up to \$5,000 are available to assist farm businesses implement on-farm infrastructure that improves drought management and preparedness.	Farm businesses in the municipalities of Wellington and East Gippsland.	Until funding expended	Call: 1800 260 425 Visit: <a href="http://www.ruralfinance.com.au">www.ruralfinance.com.au</a>
<b>Pasture Recovery and Management Grant Program</b>	Grants of up to \$5,000 are available to assist farm businesses implement pasture restoration and other activities to aid in pasture growth.	Farm businesses in the municipalities of Wellington and East Gippsland.	Until funding expended	Call: 1800 260 425 Visit: <a href="http://www.ruralfinance.com.au">www.ruralfinance.com.au</a>
<b>On-Farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate Scheme</b>	A program to assist farmers impacted by drought invest in urgently needed on-farm water infrastructure that addresses animal welfare needs.	Farm businesses in the municipalities of Wellington and East Gippsland.	Until funding expended	Call: 1800 260 425 Visit: <a href="http://www.ruralfinance.com.au">www.ruralfinance.com.au</a>
<b>Drought Relief Authority to Control Wildlife</b>	The program supports the control of wildlife by providing landholders with a simpler and faster means of accessing permits for the control of wildlife.	Eligible farm businesses in the municipalities of Wellington and East Gippsland.	Ongoing	Call: 136 186 Visit: <a href="http://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au">www.wildlife.vic.gov.au</a>
<b>Farm Debt Mediation Scheme</b>	The scheme makes it compulsory for banks and other creditors to offer mediation to farmers before commencing debt recovery proceedings on farm mortgages. Mediations are provided through the Victorian Small Business Commission.	Farm businesses.	Ongoing	Call: 136 186 Email: <a href="mailto:farm.debt@ecodev.vic.gov.au">farm.debt@ecodev.vic.gov.au</a> Visit: <a href="http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/business-management/farm-debt-mediation">www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/business-management/farm-debt-mediation</a>
<b>Farm Management Deposits</b>	The scheme 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>
<b>Regional Investment Corporation Farm Business Concessional Loans</b>	The Regional Investment Corporation offers two loan products for eligible farm businesses in Victoria: Drought Loans and Farm Investment Loans.	Farm businesses.	Ongoing	Call: 1800 875 675 Visit: <a href="http://www.ric.gov.au">www.ric.gov.au</a>

# Farm Decision Making Resources

Initiative / Service	Description	Eligibility / Available to	Timeframe	Contact information
<b>Climate tools and resources</b>	Information, tools and resources to support climate change risk management.	Farm businesses.	Ongoing	Call: 136 186 Visit: <a href="http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/weather-and-climate">www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/weather-and-climate</a>
<b>Stock Containment Areas</b>	Agriculture Victoria has developed a package of resources to support farmers in designing stock containment areas.	Farm businesses.	Ongoing	Call: 136 186 Visit: <a href="http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/drought/preparing-your-farm-for-drought">www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/drought/preparing-your-farm-for-drought</a>
<b>Feeding beef and sheep</b>	Agriculture Victoria has developed a package of booklets on feeding and managing beef and sheep during dry seasonal conditions.	Farm businesses.	Ongoing	Call: 136 186 Visit: <a href="http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons">www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons</a>
<b>Farming and drought information</b>	Information to assist farmers affected by dry conditions as well as a broad range of other agricultural issues.	Farm businesses.	Ongoing	Call: 136 186 Visit: <a href="http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons">www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons</a>
<b>Animal Health and Welfare</b>	Agriculture Victoria staff can provide advice and support for the management of livestock in dry conditions.	Farm businesses.	Ongoing	Call: 136 186 Visit: <a href="http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons">www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons</a>
<b>More Beef from Pastures and Making More from Sheep</b>	Provides information and resources for the optimal management of the feed base.	Farm businesses.	Ongoing	Visit: <a href="http://www.mla.com.au/extension-training-and-tools">www.mla.com.au/extension-training-and-tools</a>
<b>Farm Hub</b>	The Farm Hub aims to provide farmers with a single portal through which they can access information about assistance and advice to manage hardship.	Individuals and families.	Ongoing	Visit: <a href="http://www.farmhub.org.au">www.farmhub.org.au</a>

# Small Business (non-farm) Support

Initiative / Service	Description	Eligibility / Available to	Timeframe	Contact information
<b>Small Business Rural Financial Counselling</b>	Free and independent financial information, options, decision support and referral services for small businesses in drought affected communities.	Victorian Small Businesses in the municipalities of Wellington and East Gippsland.	Ongoing	Call: Eastern RFCS 1300 045 747 Visit: <a href="https://ruralfinancialcounselling.org.au">https://ruralfinancialcounselling.org.au</a>
<b>East and Central Gippsland Drought Small Business Support</b>	Free assistance for drought-affected small businesses. Support is provided by the Small Business Mentoring Service.	Small Businesses in the municipalities of Wellington and East Gippsland.	Until funding expended	Call: 1300 816 817 Visit: <a href="http://www.business.vic.gov.au">www.business.vic.gov.au</a>
<b>Free business advice from an experienced mentor</b>	Small business workshops and mobile mentor services to support small businesses. Service provided by Business Victoria.	Small businesses in the municipalities of Wellington and East Gippsland.	Ongoing	Call: 13 22 15 Visit: <a href="http://www.business.vic.gov.au/events/small-business-bus">www.business.vic.gov.au/events/small-business-bus</a>

# Community Programs

Initiative / Service	Description	Eligibility / Available to	Timeframe	Contact information
<b>Look Over the Farm Gate Program</b>	A mental health and wellbeing initiative that delivers grants for community events and mental health training.	Individuals, families and community groups in the municipalities of Wellington and East Gippsland.	Until December 31, 2019 or until funding expended	Call: 1300 882 833 Visit: <a href="http://www.lookoverthefarmgate.org.au">www.lookoverthefarmgate.org.au</a>
<b>National Centre for Farmer Health</b>	The NCFH provides leadership to improve the health wellbeing and safety of farm men and women, farm workers, families and communities.	Individuals and families.	Ongoing	Call: (03) 5551 8533 Visit: <a href="http://www.farmerhealth.org.au">www.farmerhealth.org.au</a>
<b>Tackling Tough Times Together (Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal)</b>	A grant stream that helps communities access the resources they need to support one another through the ongoing effects of the drought.	Community Groups and non-for-profit organisations in the municipalities of Wellington and East Gippsland.	Ongoing	Call: 1800 170 020 Visit: <a href="http://www.frrr.org.au/grants/tackling_tough_times_together">www.frrr.org.au/grants/tackling_tough_times_together</a>

# Health Support

Initiative / Service	Description	Eligibility / Available to	Timeframe	Contact information
<b>Mental Health Care Plan</b>	A mental health care plan entitles patients to Medicare rebates for up to 10 individual or 10 group appointments with a psychologist, occupational therapist or social worker in a year.	Individuals and families.	Ongoing	Contact your local GP for a referral Visit: <a href="http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/mental-health-care-plan">www.healthdirect.gov.au/mental-health-care-plan</a>
<b>Mental Health Crisis Line - Gippsland</b>	Psychiatric triage (information, assessment and referral) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.	Individuals and families in Wellington and East Gippsland.	Ongoing	Call: 1300 363 322
<b>Gippsland Lakes Community Health</b>		Families and individuals in the municipality of East Gippsland. Locations at Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance, Metung, Bruthen and Nowa Nowa.	Ongoing	<b>Gippsland Lakes Community Health</b> Call: (03) 5155 8300 Visit: <a href="http://www.glch.org.au">www.glch.org.au</a>
<b>Orbost Regional Health</b>	Community Health services provide a range of primary health care services that could include:	Families and individuals in Far East Gippsland.	Ongoing	<b>Orbost Regional Health</b> Call: (03) 5154 6666 Visit: <a href="http://www.orbostregionalhealth.com.au">www.orbostregionalhealth.com.au</a>
<b>Omeo District Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acute hospital care</li> <li>• Medical centre</li> <li>• Home and community care</li> <li>• District nursing</li> <li>• Women's health</li> <li>• Allied health services (podiatry, occupational therapy etc.)</li> <li>• Counselling</li> <li>• Pharmacy</li> <li>• Referrals</li> </ul>	Families and individuals in Omeo and District.	Ongoing	<b>Omeo District Health</b> Call: (03) 5159 0100 Visit: <a href="http://www.odh.net.au">www.odh.net.au</a>
<b>Central Gippsland Health Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acute hospital care</li> <li>• Medical centre</li> <li>• Home and community care</li> <li>• District nursing</li> <li>• Women's health</li> <li>• Allied health services (podiatry, occupational therapy etc.)</li> <li>• Counselling</li> <li>• Pharmacy</li> <li>• Referrals</li> </ul> <p>Please contact your local Community Health service to confirm their services.</p>	Families and individuals in the municipality of Wellington (with the exception of Yarram and District).	Ongoing	<b>Maffra Hospital</b> Call: (03) 5147 0100  <b>Sale Hospital</b> Call: (03) 5143 8600  <b>Heyfield Hospital</b> Call: (03) 5139 7979  <b>Loch Sport Community Health</b> Call: (03) 5146 0349  <b>Rosedale Community Health</b> Call: (03) 5199 2333  Visit: <a href="http://www.cghs.com.au">www.cghs.com.au</a>
<b>Yarram and District Health Service</b>		Families and individuals in Yarram and District.	Ongoing	<b>Yarram and District Health Services</b> Call: (03) 5182 0222 Visit: <a href="http://www.ydhs.com.au">www.ydhs.com.au</a>
<b>Royal Flying Doctors Service</b>	Free, confidential mental health and wellbeing service for people living in rural and remote communities.	Families and individuals.	Ongoing	Call: (03) 8412 0480 Visit: <a href="http://www.flyingdoctor.org.au/vic/our-services/wellbeing">www.flyingdoctor.org.au/vic/our-services/wellbeing</a>

# 24 Hour Support

Initiative / Service	Description	Eligibility / Available to	Timeframe	Contact information
<b>Lifeline</b>	24/7 telephone crisis support and counselling.	Individuals and families.	Ongoing	Call: 13 11 14 Visit: <a href="http://www.lifeline.org.au">www.lifeline.org.au</a>
<b>Mensline Australia</b>	24/7 service for men with relationship and family concerns.	Men.	Ongoing	Call: 1300 789 978 Visit: <a href="http://www.mensline.org.au">www.mensline.org.au</a>
<b>Kids Help Line</b>	24/7 telephone and online counselling service for young people aged 5-25.	Children.	Ongoing	Call: 1800 551 800 Visit: <a href="http://www.kidshelpline.com.au">www.kidshelpline.com.au</a>
<b>NURSE-ON-CALL</b>	24/7 phone service that provides immediate, expert health advice from a registered nurse.	Individuals and families.	Ongoing	Call: 1300 606 024
<b>1800RESPECT</b>	24/7 phone service that provides counselling for sexual assault, domestic and family violence.	Individuals and families.	Ongoing	Call: 1800 737 732 Visit: <a href="http://www.1800respect.org.au">www.1800respect.org.au</a>
<b>Family Relationships Online</b>	Providing families with access to information about family relationship issues.	Individuals and families.	Ongoing	Call: 1800 050 321 Visit: <a href="http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au">www.familyrelationships.gov.au</a>
<b>Beyond Blue</b>	24/7 telephone information and support for mental health concerns.	Individuals and families.	Ongoing	Call: 1300 224 636 Visit: <a href="http://www.beyondblue.org.au">www.beyondblue.org.au</a>
<b>Victorian Better Health Channel</b>	Health and medical information that is quality assured, reliable, up to date, easy to understand, regularly reviewed and locally relevant.	Individuals and families.	Ongoing	Email: <a href="mailto:betterhealthchannel@dhhs.vic.gov.au">betterhealthchannel@dhhs.vic.gov.au</a> Visit: <a href="http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au">www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au</a>
<b>Parentline</b>	A confidential, anonymous and free telephone counselling, information and referral service for parents.	Parents and carers with children from birth to school age.	Ongoing	Call: 1800 301 300 (8am to midnight, 7 days a week) Visit: <a href="http://www.parentline.com.au">www.parentline.com.au</a>
<b>Maternal and Child Health Line</b>	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.	Ongoing	Call: 13 22 29 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)



# Regional Drought Coordinator

Initiative / Service	Description	Eligibility / Available to	Timeframe	Contact information
<b>Regional Drought Coordinator – Gippsland</b>	The coordinator acts as a key point of co-ordination at the local level, providing information on drought services, support options, emerging risks and pressures in the region.	Farmers, farm workers, businesses, support organisations and individuals residing in the municipalities of Wellington and East Gippsland.	Ongoing	Prue McTaggart Call: (03) 5152 0480 Email: prue.mctaggart@ecodev.vic.gov.au

General information on any drought related service or assistance is available from Agriculture Victoria on 136 186 or at [www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons](http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons).

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

#### Last updated June 2019

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

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[agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons)