

# Cultivating Futures in Farming Mentoring Program Guidelines 2024

## Program Overview

The Cultivating Futures in Farming Mentoring Program provides young farmers with the opportunity to work with their mentor to assist them in:

- gaining key financial, business and people management skills required to run a successful and professional farm business.
- developing their business skills to become an effective manager and leader.
- gaining confidence in decision making and improving farm management skills.
- benchmarking business and management performance to review and improve.
- developing strategies to build resilience and achieve their business goals.

In the program, each mentee is accompanied by their own mentor upon application. This mentor could be a parent, farm manager, or business partner—individuals who already have a personal or professional relationship with the mentee. By bringing their own mentors, mentees benefit from personalized guidance and support tailored to their specific circumstances.

The program will be facilitated by a farm business consultant who will take mentees through the program, developing their personal and business goals with the support of their mentors.

The purpose of the program is to assist the mentee in building professional networks, utilising trusted sources of advice and information, and developing competency in setting business goals and assessing risks.

The program will run from August 2024 until March 2025 and a minimum of eight mentorships will be awarded.

The application period is open **until midnight Wednesday 7 August 2024**.

The Cultivating Futures in Farming Mentor Program is provided by Agriculture Victoria's Young Farmer Network as a part of the Farm Business Resilience Program. The Farm Business Resilience Program is jointly funded through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund and the Victorian Government's Future Agriculture Skills Capacity Fund

## Requirements of Mentorship Participants

On successful application for a 2024 Cultivating Futures in Farming Mentoring Program, participants are required to fulfil the following over the period of the program:

- Maintain regular contact with both their mentor and farm business consultant facilitator, and keep both parties informed of any changes in circumstance relevant to the program.
- To attend both in person and virtual sessions throughout the mentor program. Optional meetings between mentees and mentors can be held outside of the required sessions of the program.

- Demonstrate evidence of goal setting and actions taken as a result of mentoring sessions. In addition, mentorship participants are expected to do the following:
  - Share learnings and experiences with other young farmers as part of the mentorship program (i.e., share with local community or farming groups, write articles, present at events, mentor future scholarship recipients)
  - Provide feedback as part of the program evaluation process

## **Proposed Timeframe for 2024 Cultivating Futures in Farming Mentoring Program**

- Successful mentees selected by 7 August 2024
- First mentoring meeting to occur 14-15 August 2024. This session will be face-to-face, based in Birchip, Victoria.
- Five virtually held mentor program sessions between September 2024 and February 2025.
- Second mentoring meeting to occur 19-20 March 2025. This session will be face-to-face, based in Birchip, Victoria.
- Feedback collected after each session throughout the program.
- Conclusion of program by 31 March 2025.

## **Mentee Eligibility**

Applicants must:

- Be aged between 18 and 40 years at the time of the application close date.
- Be working in a food and fibre farm business in Victoria at least three days per week for the past three months.
- Have at least two years of total experience on-farm
- Be an Australian citizen or permanent resident currently residing in Victoria.

## **Selection Criteria**

Applicants must demonstrate the following to successfully address the selection criteria:

- an interest in building skills and boosting your food and fibre agricultural career prospects
- a desire to commit to working with the mentor and facilitator to build the relationship and achieve desired program outcomes
- an outline of how the program will help you to manage your farm business, identify risks and build resilience to achieve your business goals.

## **Application, Assessment and Award Process**

### **Stage 1 – Expression of interest (EOI) process**

The Young Farmer Coordinator is available to assist applicants to develop their application. For assistance, please email [tanya.dobrijevic@agriculture.vic.gov.au](mailto:tanya.dobrijevic@agriculture.vic.gov.au).

All applicants are required to read and accept the Program Guidelines before applying. By submitting an application, applicants are deemed to have accepted the Program Guidelines and agreed to be bound by them.

Applicants may submit an application form online at <https://forms.office.com/r/9whU6ES8rc>. Receipt of applications will be confirmed via email.

### **Stage 2 – Shortlisting process**

The Program Selection Committee (the Committee) assesses all applications and shortlists suitable applicants. Those who are not shortlisted will be notified by email.

The decision of the Committee as to which applicants will be interviewed will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Shortlisted applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by email or phone.

Successful applicants will be offered a mentee position.

Note: The Department considers diversity criteria when assessing applications to ensure that each year's cohort includes a diverse range of scholarship recipients, including geographic location, industry, gender, cultural background, and professional experience.

### **Stage 3 – Award of mentorship**

Successful applications will be required to sign a Letter of Agreement with the Department to accept their position as a mentee. The Letter of Agreement will identify:

- name and contact details of mentor (if applicable)
- name and contact details of mentee
- name and contact details of facilitator
- planned start date/end date
- agreement of privacy policy.

If a mentee wishes to raise an issue relating to their facilitator, they must

first contact the Young Farmer Project Coordinator at

[tanya.dobrijevic@agriculture.vic.gov.au](mailto:tanya.dobrijevic@agriculture.vic.gov.au).

### **Stage 4 – Progress updates**

Participants will be asked to provide regular updates detailing their experience with the program to the Department.

They may also be asked to take part in promotional activities, social media activities and events (online and/or live) associated with the program and other Victorian Government Young Farmer initiatives.

### **Stage 5 – Evaluation/ Completion of the Young Farmer Mentoring Program**

On completion of the mentoring program, each participant will be required to complete a short written, or video report on their experience and learnings. A template and questions will be provided at the appropriate time.

### **Assessment of Expression of Interest**

Applications will be assessed against the eligibility and selection criteria set out in the program guidelines.

Assessment of applications is based on merit taking into consideration diversity.

The Department aims to ensure the program includes a diversity of mentorship recipients, including geographic location, industry, gender, cultural background, and farming experience. An objective scoring process is used to assist in assessing applications to represent diversity across mentorship recipients.

Individuals who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander are encouraged to apply.

### **Complaints Process**

Complaints, enquiries, and feedback in relation to the processing of applications should be sent to [tanya.dobrijevic@agriculture.vic.gov.au](mailto:tanya.dobrijevic@agriculture.vic.gov.au).

If an applicant, or any other person, continues to be dissatisfied with the administration of the program they may raise their concerns with the Victorian Ombudsman.

The Victorian Ombudsman may be contacted by telephone on 1800 806 314.

### **Responsibility of Mentees**

Mentees are expected to manage all communications with their facilitators and mentors independently.

You must notify your facilitator of any changes to contact details or circumstances effecting your ability to complete the program as soon as possible.

### **Special Considerations**

If you are experiencing financial hardship or there are special circumstances which may impact your ability to accept your place in this mentorship program as per the Program Guidelines, please contact the Department.

### **Review and Amendments**

The Department in its absolute discretion may review and amend the Cultivating Futures in Farming Mentoring Program Guidelines.

### **Contact**

Tanya Dobrijevic, Young Farmer Project Coordinator at [tanya.dobrijevic@agriculture.vic.gov.au](mailto:tanya.dobrijevic@agriculture.vic.gov.au).

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