Young farmers scholarships

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**Applications for the 2021 Young Farmers Scholarship Program are now open!**

Upskill and invest

The Upskill and Invest — Young Farmers Scholarship is an opportunity to invest in you and your career.

Up to $10,000 is available per scholarship:

* up to $5000 towards study
* up to $5000 to invest in putting new skills into practice, with professional development, business planning or other on-farm activities.

The scholarship program is designed to be flexible, to fit with the demands and ambitions of young farmers and farm workers.

Since the start of the program in 2015, the Minister for Agriculture has awarded scholarships to 76 young farmers. Each year, 12 to 14 scholarships are awarded to young farmers aged 35 or younger.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the scholarship you must:

* be aged 35 years or under 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, and
* be an Australian citizen or permanent resident currently residing in Victoria.

Scholarship guidelines

These guidelines provide information on what you need to do to apply, selection criteria, and what is required of scholarship recipients.

* [Young Farmers Scholarship Guidelines (PDF - 1.9 MB)](https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/537156/Upskill-invest-young-farmers-scholarship-guidelines-2020-1.pdf)
* [Young Farmers Scholarship Guidelines (Word - 933 KB)](https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0008/561428/2020-UpskillandInvest-YoungFarmersScholarshipGuidelines.docx)

There are other pages on this site to help you complete a scholarship application. These are:

* [Examples of how a scholarship may work in practice](https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/support-and-resources/networks/young-farmers/young-farmers-scholarships/scholarship-examples)
* [Application examples](https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/support-and-resources/networks/young-farmers/young-farmers-scholarships/young-farmers-scholarships-example-applications)

Types of study or training that will be funded

Applications will be considered for any form of study or training that is relevant to developing a career in agriculture, including professional short courses or workshops.

Eligible study or training must be:

* a minimum of 16 contact hours (this may involve more than one course or workshop, and may be across multiple institutions and organisations, or offered online)
* delivered by a registered training organisation (RTO)
* delivered by another reputable organisation (such as an industry organisation) approved through discussion with the department.

For further information, contact [youngfarmer.coordinator@agriculture.vic.gov.au](mailto:YoungFarmer.Coordinator@agriculture.vic.gov.au)

See these [examples](https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/support-and-resources/networks/young-farmers/young-farmers-scholarships/scholarship-examples) for ideas of types of training that may be eligible. Alternatively you can contact the department to discuss your ideas.

Study or training in the areas of business planning and management, risk management and financial literacy are encouraged.

Study duration should not be more than 2 years, unless otherwise agreed with the department.

Upskill scholarship funds cannot be used to reimburse courses that you have already completed or are currently undertaking at the time of application. However, scholarship funds can be used to pay for future parts — for example, individual subjects or the next term or semester of a course, diploma or degree.

Upskill funds cannot be used to fund travel, accommodation, time off work or childcare costs that may be incurred by the scholarship recipient to complete training.

Upskill funds cannot be used to gain a vehicle licence.

Study opportunities in your area

The [Victorian Skills Gateway](https://www.skills.vic.gov.au/victorianskillsgateway/Pages/Home.aspx?Redirect=1) and [training.gov.au](http://training.gov.au/) provide information on vocational training and Learn Local organisations.

You can also contact your local industry organisation for information on training and development opportunities or your local Victorian Farmers Federation branch.

Invest funds

Invest funds are not made available until after all Upskill training has been completed.  You cannot use Invest funds towards recent purchases.

If you are an employee on a farm, speak with your employer about suitable Upskill training and Invest activities such as agricultural business management (Upskill), professional development (Upskill or Invest) or a project on-farm (Invest).

There are several items that Invest funds cannot be used for such as to purchase livestock, land, boats or to cover normal operational business expenses. Refer to the Program Guidelines for a full list.

Funding

Scholarship recipients receive a payment via electronic funds transfer to a nominated bank account, after they have met requirements set out in the program guidelines. Payments may take up to 4 weeks to process.

GST or other tax on scholarships

Whether the department pays the GST component of a service or other agreed purchase that you have paid for with your scholarship funds depends on your GST status.

Scholarship recipients can choose to receive the scholarship in their capacity as:

* an individual (no ABN, not a business)
* a business not registered for GST
* a business registered for GST.

If you choose to receive the scholarship as an individual, you will be reimbursed the total amount paid by you to the supplier, including the GST component.

If you choose to receive the scholarship as a business that does not need to be registered for GST, you will be reimbursed the total amount paid by you to the supplier, including the GST component.

If you choose to receive the scholarship as a business that is registered for GST, you will be reimbursed the amount paid by you to the supplier, excluding the GST applied by the supplier.

The department recommends that you seek independent financial advice on tax implications such as GST and income tax.

Incomplete studies due to illness or other personal reasons

You will need to speak with your training provider to discuss possible alternative arrangements — this may involve deferring your studies until you are in a position to restart your study or training.

You will then need to notify the department in writing of any change to your study plan.

If you are not in a position to restart your study or training, the department may recoup funds already paid to you.

2020 scholarship recipients

The six round of Young Farmers Scholarships were awarded at a ceremony at The Windsor Hotel on Tuesday20 April.

We congratulate the following scholarship recipients for 2020:

* Peter Carmichael – Buffalo, South Gippsland
* James Cox – Alexandra, Murrindindi
* Georgia Douglas – Stuart Mill, Northern Grampians
* William Fay – Carranballac, Pyrenees
* Isis Jordan – Castlemaine, Mount Alexander
* Richard McKee – Cowangie, Mildura
* Michelle Muir – Simpson, Corangamite
* Tamara Pabst – Lurg, Benalla
* Elizabeth Shotter – Fulham, Wellington
* Jen Smith – Tambo Crossing, East Gippsland
* Ty Stanton – Lilliput, Indigo Shire
* Theresa Star – Cudgewa, Towong
* Tyr-Ryan Sturgess-Myers – Shepparton, Greater Shepparton

More information

If you would like to speak to someone about the scholarship program, please contact the Customer Service Centre on [136 186](tel:136186) or email [youngfarmer.coordinator@agriculture.vic.gov.au](mailto:youngfarmer.coordinator@agriculture.vic.gov.au?subject=Young%20Farmers%20Scholarship%20program).