

Media Release

The Hon Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Resources



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TARGETED DROUGHT RESILIENCE SUPPORT GOES DIGITAL

The Victorian Government is continuing to support farmers impacted by drought and dry seasonal conditions with funding and support programs that have moved online so that they are accessible by more people.

The Business Planning and Management Support for Farmers program is part of the Government's \$31 million support package for areas affected by drought and dry conditions announced last October.

The shift to making support available online acknowledges the challenges that farmers are facing as they deal with drought, bushfires and coronavirus. As part of the program, lessons in computer literacy are being offered to ensure everyone who wants to access support can take part.

Other initiatives being delivered to farmers across the Millewa region, Goulburn Murray Irrigation District and East Gippsland include computer literacy, to improve confidence and decision-making skills and online financial literacy workshops.

Farmers can also access other programs offered online by Agriculture Victoria such as learning modules on soil and irrigation management, and a water calculator to help make important decisions on water requirements.

The Government is also continuing to refine drought support to ensure it targets those most in need.

Farms and related small businesses in affected areas can access free and independent financial counselling from the Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS), with \$640,000 allocated from the program to provide small business financial counsellors in each of the North West, North East, Gippsland and South West regions.

Funding to the RFCS has also been made available to support farm recovery efforts, including \$80,000 for Gippsland, \$640,000 for the North East and \$400,000 for the North West Service.

The Dedicated Dairy Support Program has also been extended for another year with \$320,000 to help farmers in Northern Victoria scale up, scale back or transition out of the industry.

Meanwhile, the Catchment Management Authority Drought Employment program in the Millewa and the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District has been extended until September thanks to \$500,000 in funding.

For more information about drought and dry seasonal conditions support and practical advice, visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes

"While good rainfall in many parts of Victoria is promising, it's still vital to support those farmers who continue to do it tough, and to help prepare them for future seasons."

"This is about ensuring farmers remain competitive and can access the information they need to maintain productivity during future dry conditions."