

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Wednesday, 19 October 2022

BACKING OUR FLOOD-AFFECTED BUSINESSES AND FARMERS

The Victorian Government is supporting primary producers and small businesses across Victoria affected by the devastating floods to get back in business, with an initial package of support to help kickstart their relief effort.

A \$73.5 million package will deliver grants to help farmers and business owners clean up their properties, while business mentoring, concessional loans and transport subsidies will help businesses get back on their feet.

The \$19.5 million *Primary Producer Flood Relief Program* will deliver a one-off \$10,000 payment – administered by Rural Finance – to primary producers directly affected by the floods to help them clean up, re-establish their properties, and get their businesses up and running again.

The grants will cover activities like the removal and disposal of debris and injured or dead livestock, repairing essential equipment, fixing and replacing fencing, buying fodder, water and water storage, salvaging damaged crops, grain or feed, and hiring or purchasing materials to clean up a property or equipment.

Primary producers whose properties have been directly hit are also eligible for concessional loans of up to \$250,000 to restore or replace damaged assets, and meet general expenses incurred while the clean-up is underway.

Flood-affected primary producers can also claim up to 50 per cent of transport costs – up to \$15,000 – for the transport of emergency fodder or stock drinking water, and moving stock to agistment, sale or slaughter.

Small business owners whose livelihoods have been affected by the floods will also be supported through the \$54 million *Small Business Immediate Flood Relief Program*.

Directly impacted small businesses will be eligible for a one-off payment of \$5,000 to support clean-up, safety inspections, repairs, the hiring of equipment and purchase of stock that businesses need to get back in business as quickly as possible.

The program will also support a dedicated Business Relief Service – with dedicated mentors to guide business owners through the available Commonwealth, state and local supports, manage insurance and landlord issues and build a strong recovery strategy.

Applications for both grant programs will open on Thursday, 20 October – with applicants for the agriculture grants encouraged to visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/emergency-management/floods/flood-advice-and-support. For small business grants, call the Business Victoria hotline on 132 215.

This natural disaster is a distressing time for many Victorians, whether their homes have been inundated, they have been temporarily displaced or lost part of the business they have given so much to – and a \$4.4 million initial package will support any extra mental healthcare flood-affected Victorians need.

The Government's Mental Health and Wellbeing Hubs, which were stood up during the pandemic to support extra mental health demand, will see \$1.5 million in surge funding in the worst-affected areas across regional Victoria and Melbourne's west, supporting Victorians doing it tough as a result of the floods.

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A further \$2 million will support trusted community mental health organisations to deliver care when it's needed most, while Neighbourhood Houses and Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations in affected areas will receive \$400,000 to run local events, connecting flood-affected residents across communities.

Primary producers whose properties, livestock or crops were lost in the floods will get the dedicated mental health support they need, with \$500,000 for specialist agriculture organisations including the National Centre for Farmer Health.

The Government's School Mental Health Fund has now rolled out to every government school in regional Victoria, offering an evidence-based menu of wellbeing options for schools to choose the mental health support that suits their unique cohort.

Children and their families who have been affected by the floods are strongly encouraged to contact their trusted school leaders, who can help them access that care quickly.

Victorians are reminded they can contribute to flood recovery efforts at givit.org.au/storms-and-flooding.

Quote attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"Victorian primary producers give so much to our state – and we're supporting them to get back on their feet after these floods have affected many of their livelihoods."

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Gayle Tierney

"It's been a tough week for so many communities across regional Victoria, and we want to make sure the cost of the recovery isn't a burden for primary producers."

Quote attributable to Minister for Business Support and Recovery Ben Carroll

"Small businesses are the lifeblood of regional communities – and with recovery grants and dedicated mentors to help them navigate the re-building process, we're supporting our traders to get back in business."

Quote attributable to Acting Minister for Mental Health Colin Brooks

"These floods will have a profound impact on the mental health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities – we want everyone to know there is support here for them whenever they need it."