

Joint Media Release



Steve Dimopoulos MP
Minister for Environment
Minister for Outdoor Recreation
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events
Acting Minister for Agriculture



Australian Government
Senator the Hon Murray Watt
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Minister for Emergency Management

Thursday, 18 July 2024

SUPPORT FOR NORTH-WEST VICTORIAN WINE GRAPE GROWERS

North-west Victorian wine grape growers will soon benefit from increased access to support from the Rural Financial Counselling Service thanks to the investment by the Alban Labor Government.

Acting Minister for Agriculture Steve Dimopoulos today announced a \$85,000 funding boost would increase the RFCS's capacity to support wine grape growers in the region impacted by issues related to the oversupply of red wine grapes.

The persistent oversupply of wine grapes along with other significant challenges growers faced over the past few years that were beyond their control have created significant financial hardship for growers, particularly in the Murray-Darling and Swan Hill regions.

This funding will boost the capacity of the RFCS to offer support to the approximately 280 wine grape growers in the region.

The RFCS's increased capacity will ensure they can support growers to make informed decisions to adapt to current and future market conditions.

While this funding is focused on supporting growers in the north-west, any Victorian farmer looking for financial and business support can access the RFCS.

The RFCS is a service co-funded with the Albanese Labor Government that offers free and independent financial counselling to eligible farmers, fishers, foresters, and small agriculture-related businesses experiencing or at risk of financial hardship.

This funding is in addition to the \$4.1 million allocated over two years in the *Victorian Budget 2024/25* to support the wider agricultural sector.

To learn more about the Rural Financial Counselling Service, visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management.

Quotes attributable to Acting Minister for Agriculture Steve Dimopoulos

"Wine grape growers in the north-west have faced significant, unforeseen challenges over the past few years that were beyond their control."

"We are providing our wine grape growers with the support they need to navigate these difficult times and secure a sustainable future for their businesses."

Quotes attributable to Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Murray Watt

"While many wine grape growers are now benefiting from restored wine exports to China, we recognise there are many still doing it tough."

"The Rural Financial Counselling Service has been an essential support for many growers during the oversupply, and this increased access will provide greater support for our north-west growers."

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