

Media Release

The Hon Ros Spence MP
Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Community Sport
Minister for Carers and Volunteers



Wednesday, 6 August 2025

HELPING FAMILIES MAKE ENDS MEET THROUGH THE DROUGHT

The Allan Labor Government is helping to take the pressure off families facing the worst of the drought in southwest Victoria, delivering urgent cash flow relief to get them through these challenging times.

These communities have been feeling the worst of the drought conditions over the past two years, and today Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence announced the opening of the \$2 million Household Financial Relief Program, which provides up to \$1,000 to eligible farming families to meet urgent household expenses.

The payments are open to farming families in 12 drought-affected Local Government Areas including Ararat, Moyne, Colac Otway, Pyrenees, Corangamite, Southern Grampians, Glenelg, Surf Coast, Golden Plains, Warrnambool, City of Greater Geelong, and the southern parts of West Wimmera.

The support program is being delivered by the Country Women's Association (CWA) of Victoria, which plays a pivotal role supporting rural communities and families, particularly during emergency response and recovery.

The CWA is part of the Premier's Drought Response Taskforce, which engaged directly with farmers and rural communities to make sure their needs are met through the support packages.

Mental health is also a key focus for the Taskforce, and based on its feedback, we're backing a range of targeted mental health programs to support individuals and communities feeling the strain of the prolonged drought in the \$144 Drought Support Package.

This includes the successful Look Over the Farm Gate program, which supports community-led events that promote social connection and mental health awareness through the National Centre for Farmer Health.

So far, more than 60 events have applied for funding through this program, and we are investing an additional \$500,000 to continue to provide grants of up to \$5,000 for more community events.

A \$600,000 investment will also go towards the appointment of three Rural Financial Counselling Service wellbeing counsellors in Gippsland, the north east and north west Victoria to provide support for drought-affected farmers.

Other support programs available to farmers across Victoria include the Farm Drought Support Grants, with up to \$5,000 to support investment in on-farm drought management activities. A \$5,000 top-up is available for farmers in the 12 drought-affected LGAs and southern parts of West Wimmera, taking their grants up to \$10,000.

To apply for a Household Financial Relief payment, visit cwaofvic.org.au or to view the full range of financial, technical and wellbeing support available visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/drought or phone 136 186.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence

"This targeted cash flow relief supports farming families in the south west who have been experiencing the worst drought conditions over the past two years."

"We are pleased to be working with the CWA of Victoria on a program that will give farming families support, which they can manage in a way that suits their individual needs and budgets."

Media contact: Pam Kiriakidis 0472 725 548 | pam.kiriakidis@minstaff.vic.gov.au

Quotes attributable to CWA Victoria President Jenny Nola

“The CWA of Victoria knows only too well the toll drought takes on families and has seen first-hand how relief programs such as this can ease the pressure at home.”

“We look forward to working with the Victorian Government to deliver direct support to those who need it most.”