

Media Release

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



Friday, 21 November 2025

BOOSTING SUPPORT FOR FARMERS FACING DROUGHT

The Allan Labor Government is boosting drought support for farmers and communities – expanding programs that connect Victorian farmers to essential services they need to stay resilient and overcome drought conditions.

At today's Drought Response Taskforce meeting, Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence announced an extension of key drought programs, bringing the Government's Drought Support Package to more than \$146.5 million.

Farmers from across the state will have access to a second Farm Advisory Service one-on-one consultation with a technical specialist. Community wellbeing support will continue with a new round of funding for the Look Over the Farm Gate grants program opening in February 2026, administered by the National Centre for Farmer Health.

The Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) wellbeing counsellor in the south-west will be extended until 31 December 2026, offering free confidential wellbeing support alongside financial and business counselling – helping farmers stay strong and plan for the future.

Across Victoria, more than 100 Look Over the Farm Gate events have brought communities together, engaging around 13,000 people. So far, more than 700 farmers have participated in consultations through the Farm Advisory Service, and RFCS wellbeing counsellors have supported more than 100 farming businesses.

Work will also soon begin on a major pipeline expansion, to secure water access for approximately 200 rural properties and 10 towns in the Ararat, Northern Grampians and the Pyrenees LGAs.

Backed by \$15 million from the Labor Government and \$15.6 million from Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water, the Mininera Pipeline will extend the East Grampians Rural Pipeline – currently under construction – as we continue to advocate for matched Commonwealth funding to deliver the full scope.

In addition to the drought support package, the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) will receive \$677,000 over two years to support financial services that assist Victorian farmers.

The funding will enable the VFF to support farming families to maintain ownership of their homes and land through drought periods where income is affected. Two financial capability staff members will support farmers across the state through community outreach activities and educational resources.

New support for small businesses in drought affected areas will be provided through a \$600,000 package co-funded by the Bendigo Bank Community Enterprise Foundation in partnership with Regional Development Victoria (RDV).

Grants of up to \$50,000 in eligible areas will help councils, rural and regional Chambers of Commerce, and trade associations deliver local projects that boost spending and grow business activity.

These grants are for eligible organisations in Ararat, Moyne, Colac Otway, Pyrenees, Corangamite, Southern Grampians, Glenelg, Surf Coast, Golden Plains, Warrnambool, Greater Geelong, and the southern parts of West Wimmera.

To view the full range of financial, technical and wellbeing support available to drought impacted farmers visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/drought or phone 136 186.

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Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence

“The expanded Drought Support Package means farmers will be better prepared over approaching months with assistance on water and feed budgeting, pasture re-establishment, cashflow, wellbeing and business planning.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Water Gayle Tierney

“Reliable water supply gives farmers and communities the confidence to plan ahead, protect their businesses, and stay strong through dry conditions.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Consumer Affairs Nick Staikos

“By boosting the Victorian Farmers Federation’s financial capability services, we’re investing in a program that will help support farmers through the drought and into the future as well.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Jaclyn Symes

“We know that drought is putting real pressure on small businesses that rely on local farms and producers to keep their doors open.”

Quote attributable to Bendigo Bank CEO, Richard Fennell

“With the guidance of our philanthropic arm, the Community Enterprise Foundation, we are pleased to partner with Regional Development Victoria and continue supporting businesses and communities in drought impacted areas of rural and regional Victoria.”

Quote attributable to VFF President, Brett Hosking

“We know the financial impact of drought doesn’t end when it rains. Farmers across Victoria have accrued significant losses and will need all the support they can get as they rebuild their businesses. We thank the Government for this support.”