

Media Release

The Hon Jaclyn Symes MLC

Deputy Leader of the Government in the
Legislative Council

Minister for Regional Development

Minister for Agriculture

Minister for Resources

Friday, 31 May 2019



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

MORE SUPPORT FOR NORTHERN DAIRY FARMERS

The Andrews Labor Government is providing more support to help farmers in Northern Victoria manage the effects of dry seasonal conditions and secure their long-term future.

Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes today announced an additional \$2.7 million in support for northern dairy farmers who continue to be affected by seasonal conditions and high input costs.

The extra support will put additional financial and business counsellors on the ground for farmers and small businesses in Shepparton and Swan Hill, with almost \$1 million allocated to the North East and North West Rural Financial Counselling Services.

The funding boost will also support Regional Development Victoria to partner with Murray Dairy to re-establish the Rural Skills Connect program – with over \$315,000 to support dairy farming families and farm workers seeking off-farm income to develop new skills and use their existing expertise to gain new employment.

The Government's On-farm Drought Infrastructure Support program has received more than 3,400 applications since it began in late 2018 – and an extra \$1.4 million boost will ensure North and North West, Central and East Gippsland farmers continue to receive up to \$5,000 to improve the preparedness and resilience of their farms.

The new Navigating Farm Development decision support tool and Panel of Animal Industry Experts initiative, also launched this week, will assist farmers and local government to navigate planning and permit requirements for animal industries.

These tools will make it easier for dairy farmers and local government to plan their infrastructure investments, and transition to more intensive farm systems if they choose.

The dairy industry has helped shape this support package and the Labor Government is committed to working with Victorian farmers to ensure the right support is on hand, when and where they need it most.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes

"Our dairy farmers in Northern Victoria are still doing it tough after extended dry conditions – and this funding boost will ensure they continue to get the support they need to make their farm businesses more resilient."

"I would urge everyone impacted by drought and dry seasonal conditions to visit the Agriculture Victoria website and apply for the support that's available to them."

Quote attributable to Minister for Water Lisa Neville

"We understand the challenges many irrigators are facing with high temporary water prices and we're looking at what else we can do to help ease the pressure, particularly for the dairy industry."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Mark Gepp

"We're listening to farmers in Northern Victoria - and this funding will support them when they need it most. I'm proud to be part of a government helping drought-affected farmers build resilience and plan for the future."

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