

Drought Assistance Initiatives

Name of initiative	Extending the Case Management Approach to Supporting Farmers through Drought and Adjustment (including those culturally and linguistically diverse clients).
Purpose	To broaden the reach of the 'pilot' rural financial counselling Case Management approach for all Victorian farmers, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, to assist with accessing adjustment and drought support services.
How	This initiative has two significant components; (i) it will extend the new Case Management for Farmers project, funded through the Future Farming strategy across the whole of the State providing a Senior Rural Financial Counsellor Co-ordinator position for both the Wimmera South West and Gippsland Rural Financial Counselling Services. The Case Management for Farmers project will support farmers through adjustment and transition processes by building the capacity of the Rural Financial Counselling Services to deliver a case management approach. This senior role, as well as some training and development funds, is now available to all of the 5 Victorian Rural Financial Counselling Services. (ii) to build on the outcomes and recommendations from the 'Providing Specialist Financial Counselling Services to Non-English Speaking Background Farmers' project, originally funded by the Government's Drought and Frost response package in late 2006. This project will provide a direct link and improved access between ethnically diverse in the North East, Goulburn Valley, Sunraysia and Werribee/Bacchus Marsh areas and the relevant Rural Financial Counselling Services through a range of group and one-to-one interactions and communication materials.

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Who

This project is targeted at the two areas of Victoria where funding was previously unavailable for this role now ensuring a full coverage of the State. Case management will be adopted to support individual farmers and their families across a broader range of adjustment issues where there is a recognised need.

Work with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities will focus in the key horticultural areas across the State, namely the North East, Goulburn Valley, Sunraysia and Werribee/Bacchus Marsh.

Why

Farmers are now facing difficulties caused by the continuing dry conditions. The magnitude of the decision making now facing farm families requires a more sophisticated response from government. The Future Farming Strategy advocates the need for a more coordinated case management approach to support farm families through drought and adjustment.

The current Case Management for Farmer project is rolling out enhanced support for drought affected farmers in the northern irrigation regions. This initiative will extend the scope of the Case Management for Farmers project to ensure it is adequately servicing farmers from all cultural backgrounds across the State.

Farmers seeking support to maintain and build financial viability will be required to develop Action Plans in conjunction with the rural financial counsellors. The Action Plan process is structured and includes goals, strategies, actions and timelines for the farmer to follow. Farmers receiving this support should improve their ability to set goals and take action to improve their financial and business planning skills, or to set themselves up for a career after farming if they choose to exit the industry.

Further information

For more information please call 136 186.

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