Household Financial Relief Program

Victorian Government drought support

July 2026

The Country Women's Association of Victoria Inc.
care empower contribute

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

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We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it.

We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

DEECA is committed to genuinely partnering with Victorian Traditional Owners and Victoria's Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.

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Program Guidelines

1. About the Program

The Victorian Government has established the $2 million Household Financial Relief Program (the Program) to provide immediate assistance to farming families and those working on farms affected by drought conditions.

The Program is a key component of the increased drought assistance being provided to Victorian farmers.

The Country Women's Association Inc (CWA) of Victoria will deliver the Program.

Under the Program, the CWA of Victoria will provide payments of up to $1,000 to eligible farming families to assist with household expenses such as residential rates, food, school expenses, rent, household and medical bills.

The Program is available to eligible recipients in the following local government areas: Ararat, Moyne, Colac Otway, Pyrenees, Corangamite, Southern Grampians, Glenelg, Surf Coast, Golden Plains, Warrnambool, Greater Geelong and southern postcodes in West Wimmera (3312, 3317, 3318 and 3319).

The Program is open for applications until 31 December 2026 or until funds are expended whichever comes first and applications will be processed in order of receipt.

2. Program Objective

The Household Financial Relief Program will assist farming families and those working on farms, affected by drought to meet household expenses.

3. Eligible Expenses

Eligible household expenses must be incurred after 4 July 2025.

Eligible household expenses include (but are not limited to):

- Residential rates
- Groceries and food
- School expenses
- Household bills (electricity, gas, water)
- Rent
- Telephone expenses
- Dental and medical treatment.

4. Ineligible Expenses

Activities and expenses not eligible for payment include (but are not limited to):

- General farm business expenses (e.g. equipment, irrigation, insurance, fodder)
- Capital works
- Farm rates notice – without your principal residence
- Expenses that do not incur an invoice or receipt
- Household expense purchases prior to 4 July 2025
- Interest on loans - either for a primary residential mortgage or business-related loans.

5. Eligibility

To be eligible to access funding under the Household Financial Relief Program:

- You are a primary production property owner, share farmer or lease holder, or
- You are employed, or were recently employed (this includes employment on a part-time or casual basis), by a farming business, or
- You are a farming dependent contractor
- Your farming property/location of employment or contracting business is located (or servicing farms) in an eligible local government area
- The majority of your family's labour is devoted to the farming business, or
- Under normal business conditions*, the majority of your household's income is derived from farming enterprises (either as a business owner, employee or farming dependent contractor).

Only one payment is available per eligible farming family.

If you are also receiving an Australian Government income support payment (e.g. JobSeeker Payment, Age Pension, or Farm Household Allowance), this income should be declared as **drought financial assistance**. Payments assessed by Services Australia that meet the definition do not count towards your income test.

* Normal business conditions refer to a year with no adverse climatic conditions (drought, flood, fire) in which average yield/ productivity is achieved.

6. Additional Eligibility Criteria

Activities or invoices that have received (or are approved to receive) funding from another source will be ineligible for payments.

Applicants will be asked to provide evidence of their eligibility status.

- For farm business owners, share farmers or leases, this may include: ABN number, rates notice, lease documentation, share-farming contract and Property Identification Code.
- For farm employees, this may include: Employment contract, pay slip, signed letter from employer.
- For farming dependent contractors, this may include: ABN number, business plans, service agreements, invoices.

7. Application and Assessment Process

Applicants should carefully consider activities against the eligibility criteria set out in the Program Guidelines before submitting an Application.

Applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria.

Applications for the Program should be submitted to the CWA of Victoria – Drought Relief application process.

The CWA of Victoria and/or Agriculture Victoria reserves the right to request further information from you or from any business or individual you have engaged, to assist in assessing the application and to verify any information provided in your application.

The CWA of Victoria will process completed applications in order of receipt.

By signing the application form, you are declaring that the information provided in the application and supporting documentation is true and accurate.

Providing inaccurate, untrue or misleading information may be a breach of criminal law for which serious penalties may apply.

Step 1 - Application process opens

Applicant to:

- Complete the CWA Drought Relief application form and submit to the CWA of Victoria.
- Applications must be supported by evidence of eligibility, and invoices or receipts for the full value of the requested payment must be retained by the applicant (this may include bills that cover $1,000 or more – eligible Applicants will be reimbursed up to the $1,000 maximum).

Step 2 - Approval and payment process

- The CWA of Victoria will contact the Applicant if clarification of submitted information or further information is required.
- Successful applicants will have payments directed into the Applicant's designated bank account.
- Unsuccessful Applicants will be advised.

Step 3 - Payment

- Payment will be processed as soon as possible following approval via electronic funds transfer to the applicant's nominated bank account.

The CWA of Victoria, in consultation with Agriculture Victoria may audit successful applicants throughout the life of the Program.

8. Funding Source

The Victorian Government is providing increased support to assist farming families affected by drought. On 4 July 2025, the Victorian Government announced a $75 million Drought Support Package of which $2 million was targeted for household financial relief.

9. Duration of the Program

Payments will be available from the date the Program opens until 31 December 2026 or until the Program funds are fully expended; whichever comes first.

10. Review and Amendment

The Program Guidelines are correct at the time of publishing.

Agriculture Victoria may review and amend this Program at any time.

11. Evaluation

Agriculture Victoria may conduct an evaluation to determine the extent to which the Household Financial Relief Program has contributed to Victorian Government policy objectives. Recipients may be requested to provide information to assist in auditing during the Program or the evaluation after the Program's completion.

12. Further Information

Country Women's Association of Victoria
Telephone: (03) 9827 8971
Email: **drought@cwaofvic.org.au**
Web: **https://cwaofvic.org.au**
Postal address: Drought Relief, CWA of Victoria, 3 Lansell Road, Toorak VIC 3142.

Agriculture Victoria (part of the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action)
A range of support is available to farmers affected by drought conditions. Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to participate in these programs.

For more information about other drought support being provided by the Victorian Government, please contact Agriculture Victoria.

Telephone: 136 186
Email: **drought.support@agriculture.vic.gov.au**
Web: **https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/drought-support**

13. Publicity

Grant recipients may be asked to assist Agriculture Victoria in promotion of the Program. This may include involvement in media releases, case studies or promotional events and activities.

Agriculture Victoria may request recipients to fact check any text and seek all relevant approvals in order for Agriculture Victoria to use any imagery provided by the recipient associated with the Program prior to the publication of any such promotional materials.

Recipients must not make any public announcement or issue any press release regarding the receipt of a grant without the prior written approval of Agriculture Victoria.

Agriculture Victoria may publicise the benefits accruing to the recipient and/or the State of Victoria associated with the provision of the Household Financial Relief Program.

14. Privacy Collection Statement

Any personal information provided by the Applicant or a third party in an application will be collected by the CWA of Victoria and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) (Agriculture Victoria) for the purpose of administration of the Program. This information may be provided to other Victorian Government bodies for the purposes of assessing the Household Financial Relief Program (for example, the Victorian Auditor General).

Data gathered through assessments may be compiled, aggregated and made anonymous by the CWA of Victoria and Agriculture Victoria for program reporting, evaluation and research purposes.

Any personal information collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred will be held in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)* and other applicable laws.

Agriculture Victoria is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. Information regarding DEECA's approach to privacy can be found online at **https://www.deeca.vic.gov.au/privacy#personal**.

Enquiries about access to information should be directed to **drought.support@agriculture.vic.gov.au**

15. Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the CWA of Victoria and the Victorian Government and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

The CWA of Victoria and the Victorian Government reserve the right in their absolute discretion to amend the guidelines without notice or discontinue the Program or approve amendments to administration arrangements.

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