

**DROuGHT rEcovery**

**Grant Program**

**Guidelines**

*2021*

# Drought Recovery Grant Program

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

About the Program

Agriculture Victoria and Mildura Rural City Council have established the Drought Recovery Grant Program for farm businesses to implement approaches to assist in the recovery of extended drought conditions.

A one-off grant of up to $3,000 (ex-GST) per farm business is available to assist eligible farm businesses implement drought restoration and other land management activities that may aid in drought recovery.

The program is available to eligible farm businesses located in the Millewa Carwarp area of the Mildura Rural City Council Local Government Area.

# PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

The Drought Recovery Grant Program will support farm businesses to:

• Help manage the farm property to recover from drought conditions

• Support the long-term viability of the farm

• Minimise further damage to soil

• Help prevent soil erosion and environmental impacts.

# ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Eligible activities include:

* Costs associated with professional contractors and/or services used for soil erosion restoration and/or activities to prevent erosion
* Costs associated with sand drift impacted fence lines. This is inclusive of; fence posts, droppers, strainers, wire and other equipment
* Hire machinery for reformation of dunes; such as graders
* Establishment of ground cover for ground stabilisation that aims to prevent ongoing soil erosion
* Planting of native or indigenous vegetation for wind breaks that aims for protection from soil erosion
* Planting of new season seed and the use of associated fertiliser for protection from soil erosion
* Planting of native or indigenous trees and revegetation activities
* Protection of remnant vegetation activities
* Costs associated with seeking professional advice to undertake soil erosion restoration and/or management of soil erosion
* Items to construct a new or upgrade an existing Stock Containment Area (SCA); such as fencing, gates, water troughs, piping, tanks, pumps and livestock feeders.

# INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

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

* Standard variable inputs for normal operations (e.g., water, fodder or grain purchase costs, hay production) or non-livestock parts of the business (e.g., grain production)
* On-farm infrastructure not specified as eligible activities or other types of infrastructure that do not relate to erosion restoration or prevention
* Wages for your employees or your self-assessed labour or transport costs
* Training costs
* Replacing or maintenance of existing agricultural machinery and equipment (e.g., tractors)
* Purchase, lease or acquisition of land
* Purchase, lease or maintenance of transportation
* Vehicles (e.g., cars, motorbikes, quadbikes, quadbike safety devices, trailers and trucks)
* Utilities and operating costs of the business

(e.g. gas, electricity, rates)

* Purchase of livestock
* Standard boundary or house fencing
* Pre-existing annual fees
* Administration, legal or insurance costs
* Activities that will not be completed by 30 June 2022.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

The following FAQ’s may assist in determining if your activity is an eligible purchase.

# Q. How far do wind breaks protect land downwind?

**A.** Windbreaks protect land downwind for about 10 times the height of the break e.g., a 5-metre-high windbreak will protect approximately 50 metres down wind.

**Q** **Is buying seed and fertiliser to plant ground cover in an eroded area an acceptable process?**

# A If the seed and fertiliser is for areas that are currently eroding than yes, it is an acceptable purchase. If the area isn’t eroded, it isn’t an acceptable purchase.

**Q** **I own, share or lease more than one property?**

# A One grant will be offered per applicant. An applicant who operates more than one farm business may only apply for a grant for one of their businesses.

**Q** **Will I need Land Managers Consent to plant native trees on roadsides?**

# A Yes, you will need to obtain the necessary permits and approvals to plant on public land.

**WHO CAN APPLY? (PARTICIPANTS)**

Eligible participants are required to:

1. Own, share or lease farm businesses located in the Millewa Carwarp area of the Mildura Rural City Council Local Government Area (LGA).
2. Be registered as a primary producer with the Australian Tax Office and have an ABN and be registered for GST.
3. Have a right or interest in the land for the purpose of primary production.
4. Contribute a significant part (more than 51 per cent) of his/her labour to the farming enterprise.1
5. Derive 51 per cent of gross annual income from the farm business OR made a minimum farm related capital investment of $50,000 (excluding land purchase) in the farm business over the last financial year.
6. You can demonstrate that your paddocks have been significantly impacted as a result of drought.

**GENERAL CONDITIONS**

* Late applications will not be accepted.
* To receive grant funds, successful applicants must enter into a Funding Agreement with Council and adhere to all conditions outlined in the agreement.
* Sign a Statutory Declaration that you meet the eligibility of the Program. Businesses may be asked to produce evidence, such as financial statements, to validate eligibility.
* The minimum value of a grant to eligible applicants is $1,000 (ex-GST). The maximum is $3,000 (ex-GST).
* One grant will be offered per applicant. An applicant who operates more than one farm business may only apply for a grant for one of their businesses.
* Applications for the Drought Recovery Grant Program will be processed in order of receipt.
* Payment of the approved amount will be arranged and processed as soon as possible via electronic funds transfer (EFT) to the applicant’s nominated account.
* Mildura Rural City Council, in consultation with Agriculture Victoria may audit successful applicants throughout the life of the Program.
* Where activities can normally be funded through other Commonwealth Government and State programs they will not be funded through the Drought Recovery Grant Program
* Activities or items that have received (or are approved to receive) funding from another source will be ineligible for funding under this program.

**WRITING THE APPLICATION**

* When answering questions, always assume that the grant assessment team are unfamiliar with your project.
* Take note of the assessment criteria for each question and answer questions accordingly. Provide enough detail for the assessor to make an informed judgement on your project.
* Answer questions concisely and only include information that is relevant to your project, application and the question.
* Complete application form including supplying all supporting documentation. LINK HERE

# ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Funding will be allocated through a grant application and assessment process through the Mildura Rural City Council website.

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

* Application meets Eligibility Activity Criteria.
* Application meets Who Can Apply (Participants) Eligibility Criteria.
* Applicants are required to supply a quotation or tax invoice for the proposed activity, and photos demonstrating project eligibility. i.e. – erosion, sand drift impacted fence line.

# DURATION OF THE PROGRAM

# The Program will be open for applications until the date the Program funds are exhausted or 11.59pm on 30 June 2022, whichever is earlier.

# REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

Mildura Rural City Council and the Agriculture Victoria may review and amend the grants program at any time.

# FINANCIAL ACQUITTAL

All successfully funded projects will be required on the completion of the project to:

* Spend the grant funds as outlined in the approved grant application and in accordance with the terms of the funding agreement.
* Complete the funded project by 30 June 2022.
* Return any unspent funds to Council at the end of the grant period.
* Seek consent from Council for any modifications required that alter the original approval to the funds being spent. All requests will be considered and the applicant will be notified of Council’s decision. Approval must be received before alterations can proceed.
* On completion, grant recipients are required to provide a final report, forward paid tax invoices/s and photos of completed activity (or other evidence) to Mildura Rural City Council. Reporting templates will be provided to applicants.

# EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

The Mildura Rural City Council and Agriculture Victoria may conduct an evaluation to determine the extent to which the Drought Recovery Grant Program has contributed to Agriculture Victoria policy objectives. Grant recipients may be requested to provide information to assist in auditing during the program or the evaluation after the program’s completion.

**GUIDANCE FOR DROUGHT RESTORATION**

# DECISION MAKING

Information on prevention and management of erosion can be found on Agriculture Victoria website here:

**Farm management soil erosion**

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/soil/erosion>.

**Protecting the land in dry times**

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/managing-for-and-during-drought/protecting-the-land-in-dry-times>.

**Monitoring groundcover and soil degradation**

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/soil/erosion/monitoring-groundcover-and-soil-degradation>.

**Effective shelterbelt design**

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/soil/erosion/effective-shelterbelt-design>.

**Shelterbelt maintenance and management**

https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/soil/erosion/shelterbelt-maintenance-and-management.

**Stock containment areas for emergencies**

Information about grazing management systems can be found on the Agriculture Victoria website: Grazing-management-systems.

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/land-and-pasture-management/grazing-management-systems>

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/water/managing-dams/water-supply-in-stock-containment-areas>

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/support-and-resources/case-studies/drought-case-studies/using-stock-containment-to-preserve-ground-cover>

Drought related information can be found for the municipality of Mildura Rural City Council. To find out more about the workshops available please visit: https://www.mildura.vic.gov.au/Community/Drought-Information.

Fact sheets about farm management practices during drought can be found on the Agriculture Victoria website: <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/managing-for-and-during-drought>.

# LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Information on the online learning management system on Land Management (soils, groundcover and managing erosion) and Stock containment Areas can be found on the Agriculture Victoria website: <https://learning.agriculture.vic.gov.au/>

To access e-Learns, users will need to set up an account.

Tips for setting up an e-Learn account:

* Users will need to set up an account (email address, username and password)
* Users will need to select if they are a farmer, advisor or other (to access the soil e-Learn, you need to select farmer or advisor)
* Verify their email address
* Then start the e-Learns.

# FURTHER INFORMATION

**Mildura Rural City Council**

Telephone: 03 5018 8100

## Email: mrcc@mildura.vic.gov.au

## Web: https://www.mildura.vic.gov.au

Postal address: **PO Box 105, Mildura VIC 3502**

# 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.

Mildura Rural City Council and the 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.

Mildura Rural City Council and Agriculture Victoria may publicise the benefits accruing to the recipient and/or the State of Victoria associated with the provision of the Drought Recovery Program grant.

# CONFIDENTIALITY

Any personal information provided by the Applicant or a third party in an application will be collected by Mildura Rural City Council and Agriculture Victoria for the purpose of administration of the Program. This information may be provided to other Agriculture Victoria bodies for the purposes of assessing Drought Recovery Grant Program applications.

Data gathered through assessments may be compiled, aggregated and made anonymous by Mildura Rural City Council 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.

Mildura Rural City Council and Agriculture Victoria is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. Agriculture Victoria’s Privacy Policy can be found online at www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/privacy. Enquiries about access to information should be directed to the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions’ Privacy Unit by phone on 136 186 or email privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au.