

This newsletter is intended to provide up-to-date information to assist organisations involved in drought response.

Distribution: Hume Region Drought Working Group, Hume Regional Managers Forum, Local Government Drought Committees, other drought support organisations and front counter staff.

Hume Region Drought Working Group aims to improve the accessibility and coordination of drought services in the Hume Region.

NEWS

CARTED AND NON-MAINS WATER REBATE 2006/07

The Non-Mains Water Concession, also known as the Carted Water Rebate, is designed to assist low-income Victorian households with the cost of purchasing non-mains domestic water, for filling rainwater tanks, water cartage or other non-mains water costs. Depending on how much is spent on non-mains water over a financial year, eligible households can receive up to 3 rebate payments to assist with these water costs.

Eligible cardholders can make applications during the year to claim the rebates as they buy water, or wait until the end of the year and submit one application for up to 3 rebates at once.

Eligible persons must complete the Carted and Non Mains Water Rebate application form, available from the Department of Human Services, Concessions Unit. For more information or an application form, call **1800 658 521**.

BEYOND BLUE AND INCITEC PIVOT AWARENESS PROGRAM

beyondblue and Incitec Pivot have formed a partnership to address depression in drought affected areas. The two organisations will work together to raise awareness of depression and its impact in rural Australia during these tough times. Incitec Pivot, supported by *beyondblue*, is planning depression/awareness farmer forums in our region, to help build resilience in rural communities and highlight the practical support available. For more information go to www.beyondblue.org.au or call 1300 22 4636.

MENSLINE AUSTRALIA is a national service that supports men dealing with family and relationship difficulties, particularly, family breakdown or separation. Anonymous telephone support, information and referral is provided 24hrs a day, seven days per week, for the cost of a local call. Counsellors are professionally trained to provide responses and approaches that specifically suit the way men think and behave. Mensline has ready access to relevant information and referral to men's services at any time and from anywhere in the country. Mensline is managed by Crisis Support Services, a not-for-profit, non-government organisation that also operates a number of other specialist services. Call Mensline Australian on **1300 78 99 78**.

SALVOS LAUNCH DROUGHT APPEAL

The Salvation Army will have increased its social programme spend today by an initial two million dollars in support families living in the worst drought-affected areas in Australia. The new Drought Appeal will focus on strengthening the capacity of families to survive, specifically helping to make the lives of the children as 'normal' as possible. The initiative will concentrate on those who are most at risk, providing them with:

- drinking water supplies
- counsel/pastoral care and emotional support
- financial assistance with household bills
- social activities in townships that bring the community together.

Victorians needing assistance from our drought relief services, please contact (03) 5441 7959.

DROUGHT BUS RETURNS

Drought buses will be travelling around the worst drought affected areas of Victoria to let rural communities know about services available. People will be able to speak to someone about the assistance available, an expert who knows about working on the land, from financial counsellors to social workers and everyone in between.

Schedule:

Tallangatta	Mon 19 Feb 2007	1.00 pm to 5.00 pm
Yackandandah	Tues 20 Feb 2007	9.00am to 12.00 pm
Beechworth	Tues 20 Feb 2007	2.00 pm to 5.00 pm
Myrtleford	Wed 22 Feb 2007	10.00 am to 5.00 pm
Alexandra	Thur 23 Feb 2007	12.00 pm to 5.00 pm
Tooborac	Fri 24 Feb 2007	1.00 pm to 3.00 pm

BUSHFIRE RECOVERY ASSISTANCE 2006/07

The Victorian Government has announced the availability of a Clean-up and Restoration Grant of up to \$3,000 for **primary producers, small businesses** and **not-for-profit organisations** effected by the significant fire events in Gippsland and North East Victoria. The grants are being administered by Rural Finance.

<http://www.ruralfinance.com.au/pages/Default.aspx?>

BUSHFIRE RECOVERY

Landmate crews are small groups of prisoners, under the supervision of an experienced Officer (Industry Officer) who undertake environmental related works on private and public land coordinated in the NE by DSE in the Beechworth and surrounding districts. The works are specifically to achieve an improvement in native vegetation (condition or extent). We have been offered an additional crew of 10-12 from Dhurringile Prison who can go anywhere in Victoria, and camp out from Monday to Friday. This program will be available to help landholders who have been affected by the recent fires.

Contact: **Mary Titcumb DSE** (02) 6043 7956

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS DIRECTORY

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<p>Exceptional Circumstances declarations cover all of Hume Region. Eligible farmers and small business in EC areas can access income support payments, interest rate subsidies and the Victorian Government's EC municipal rates subsidy.</p>	<p>EC Income Support —132 316 EC Business Interest Rate —03 5448 2600 EC Municipal Rate Subsidy—136 186 EC Small Business Support— 132 316</p>
<p>Business Continuity Program — Regional Development Victoria is providing funds through the Business Continuity Program offering one-on-one and group, business consulting support to non farm businesses significantly affected by the drought. For more information visit :http://www.business.vic.gov.au/busvicwr/assets/main/lib60147/</p>	<p>Regional Development Victoria Wangaratta — 03 5721 6988 Shepparton — 03 5821 1811 Wodonga — 02 6056 2166</p>
<p>Bushfire Recovery Assistance 2006/07— The Victorian Government has announced the availability of a Clean-up and Restoration Grant of up to \$3,000 for primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profit organisations affected by the significant fire events in Gippsland and North East Victoria. The grants are being administered by Rural Finance.</p>	<p>mailto:shepparton@ruralfinance.com.au mailto:wodonga@ruralfinance.com.au Visit: http://www.ruralfinance.com.au/pages/Default.aspx?PageID=62&id=1</p>
<p>Drought Relief for Country Sports provides grants to help rural Communities develop sustainable approaches to water management to allow greater use of swimming pool and sports ground facilities.</p>	<p>Department for Victorian Communities Grants Information Line — 1300 366 356</p>
<p>Future Farm Planning provides access to advice to help with making decisions about crops and production in the short term, medium and longer term e.g. extension advice on tree and vine survival, rural financial counselling for farmers from Non English speaking backgrounds.</p>	<p>DPI Customer Service Centre — 136 186</p>
<p>One to One Extension Services and Advice for Farmers is available for farmers affected by drought. Visit the DPI web link (listed on next page) for Farming Information booklets</p>	<p>DPI Customer Service Centre — 136 186</p>
<p>Drought Employment Program provides drought affected people with work on a range of on ground projects on private and public land to protect and sustain important environmental assets. Projects may include fencing, pest, plant and animal management, stock containment and environmental works.</p>	<p>GBCMA — 03 5831 6254 NECMA — 02 6043 7600</p>
<p>Rural Financial Counsellors can provide free, independent and confidential financial assessment to primary producers, fishers and small rural businesses who are suffering financial hardship.</p>	<p>Albury — 02 6948 4489 Kyabram — 03 5851 3421 Benalla & Cobram— 03 5167 1611 Seymour — 03 5735 1242</p>
<p>Local Infrastructure Works Program — Funding for this program has now closed and approval has been given for a range of minor infrastructure works. Regional Development Victoria has made payments of \$300,000 to participating councils that have been declared under Exceptional Circumstances.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">APPLICATIONS NOW CLOSED</p>
<p>Water for Industry Initiative will work in partnership with industry and water authorities to reduce water consumption and increase reuse of water supply. Priority will be given to projects that provide sustainable benefits to the local economy and community.</p>	<p>Regional Development Victoria Wangaratta — 03 5721 6988 Shepparton — 03 5821 1811 Wodonga — 02 6056 2166</p>
<p>Salvation Army Drought Appeal will focus on strengthening the capacity of families to survive, specifically helping to make the lives of the children as 'normal' as possible. The initiative will concentrate on those who are most at risk, providing them with: drinking water supplies, counsel/pastoral care and emotional support, financial assistance with household bills and more.</p>	<p>Victoria — 03 5441 7959</p>

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS DIRECTORY

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<p>Drought Assistance for Rural Water Users. Goulburn Murray Water customers receiving less than 50% of their normal water allocation will be eligible for a rebate to meet the fixed water supply charges on farmers' 06/07 bills, up to the value of \$5,000.</p>	<p>Goulburn Murray Water — 03 5833 5500</p>
<p>Drought Apprenticeship Retention Bonus is available to help businesses in EC declared areas, which directly provide services to the farming industry, keep their apprentices.</p>	<p>DPI Customer Service Centre — 136 186</p>
<p>Specific Water Initiatives include: The Federal Government has supported a number of water initiatives, specific information is available through the DPI Website (link listed below) or phone the Customer Service Centre.</p>	<p>DPI Customer Service Centre — 136 186 DHS — 1800 658 521</p>
<p>Help for eligible families in drought affected communities unable to meet the costs Kindergarten Fees.</p>	<p>DPI Customer Service Centre — 136 186</p>
<p>Community Events and Programs will be hosted by local councils to host in 14 of the worst drought affected municipalities to help boost community morale. These events will be determined by councils.</p>	<p>DPI Customer Service Centre — 136 186</p>
<p>VicRelief and Foodbank are just two of the many agencies to receive support to help communities access aid resources.</p>	<p>DPI Customer Service Centre — 136 186</p>
<p>Community leaders and service providers can receive help to deal with the complex needs and mental health issues experienced during the prolonged drought.</p>	<p>DPI Customer Service Centre — 136 186</p>
<p>Small Towns Development Fund for innovative water projects in small towns. Eligible projects will include the improved use of recycled water for community facilities, such as sports ovals, bowls clubs, golf courses, parks and gardens; and projects that improve access to high quality drinking water.</p>	<p>Regional Development Victoria Wangaratta — 5721 6988 Shepparton — 5821 1811 Wodonga — 02 6056 2166</p>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> Useful Links </div> <p style="margin-top: 10px;"> Drought Personal Support Line Department of Primary Industries Dry Seasonal Conditions Report Centrelink DSE Rural Financial Counselling Department of Human Services Country Women's Association of Victoria Regional Development Victoria Department of Victorian Communities Goulburn Murray Water North East Water Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority North East Catchment Management Authority NE Victorian Division of General Practice & Northeast Health Wangaratta </p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> Feedback </div> <p style="margin-top: 10px;"> Please email your comments, ideas/ articles to: kerry.moylan@dpi.vic.gov.au </p>