



Rural Skills Cadetship Program

HOME WORK TO LURE PROVINCIAL TERTIARY STUDENTS

Up to 100 tertiary students from provincial Victoria will receive assistance to find work in their regions during term breaks under an \$800,000 initiative launched today by Regional and Rural Development Minister Jacinta Allan.

Ms Allan said the Rural Skills Cadetship Program will help young people from provincial Victoria stay connected to the regions, boosting their chances of returning permanently.

Full-time university and TAFE students are eligible for the employment assistance, part of the Moving Forward Update initiative to strengthen key aspects of provincial economies.

"Young people from provincial Victoria who are studying in other locations are more likely to return if they remain connected to it," Ms Allan said.

"This initiative provides opportunities for local government and industry to meet short-term employment needs while investing in these prospective future employees.

"The value of having these young people return to provincial Victoria - bringing their acquired skills, qualifications and experience - will help keep provincial Victoria the best place to live, work and invest."

Students can receive up to \$5000 towards their educational transport and living costs while studying; an employer is paid up to \$2500 for two years.

Ms Allan said the program would be available to regional businesses or public sector organisations that:

- demonstrated a skill and employment need important to the regional economy; and
- agreed to employ a student for at least six weeks a year for up to two years.

Ms Allan said as part of Moving Forward: Update – The Next Two Years 2008 to 2010 the Brumby Government is investing \$68 million in five priority areas, including \$7.38 million for skills development.

"A skilled workforce is vital for employment and economic growth in provincial Victoria," Ms Allan said.

"Attracting skilled people to provincial Victoria needs to be complemented by retraining or improving the skills of the existing population and identifying emerging skills shortages."

Applications for cadetships close on 15 October 2008.

Applicants should contact their local council or Regional Development Victoria on 03 9651 9301.

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

FROM THE EDITOR

Rain has been scarce and farmers and businesses alike seem to be feeling the effects now as much as ever.

Remember to keep yourself updated with current grants and initiatives available so as to keep your community informed.

If you have any info you think the rest of the Region could benefit from, feel free to forward it on to me so I can place it in the next newsletter.

Regards,
Toni Eames
Ph: 02 6030 4614
Email: toni.eames@dpi.vic.gov.au

Calendar of Drought Related Events

view online now to see what is coming up in your area.

[Calendar of Drought Related Events](#)

NEWS

Woolworths Sustainable Farming Program – Innovation Grants

Grants of \$5,500 (including GST) are now available to Australian farmers under the Woolworths Sustainable Farming Program, thanks to the support of Woolworths shoppers, who raised funds to help Australian Farmers in 2008.

The Woolworths Sustainable Farming Program is a collaboration between Landcare Australia and Woolworths to develop, improve and encourage sustainable farming practices. Applications are being sought from individuals or groups who wish to undertake innovation projects in any primary production industry that are in areas that were declared eligible for 'Exceptional Circumstance' assistance or 'Interim Assistance' in January 2008.

The grants are aimed at supporting farmers develop or implement good ideas to improve the sustainability of farming practices. 'Innovation' relates to farming practices, production techniques, technology or products that have not been previously developed and/or adopted before or only on a limited scale.

Innovative ideas that will share information about successful strategies for managing drought are most welcome. Farming innovations could focus on issues such as climate change adaptation, crop or animal production, water or nutrient use efficiency, management of waste or salinity. The innovation projects should also provide results of interest and benefits to the farmers.

Closing date for applications – 22nd October.

To download Application Guidelines, Assessment criteria, and Application form, click on the attached links.

[Application Guidelines and Assessment Criteria](#)
[Application Form](#)

Backing our Farmers
'The Fresh Food People'
WOOLWORTHS



Did you know you can access current and previous issues of the Hume Region Drought Newsletter on the DPI website?

Simply follow the link!

[DPI Website - Hume Region Drought Newsletter](#)

NEW EXIT GRANT PACKAGE TO ASSIST SMALL-SCALE IRRIGATORS

The Rudd Government is offering to buy the water entitlements of small block irrigators in the Murray-Darling Basin who agree to sell all their water entitlement to the Commonwealth.

The Government will offer up to \$150,000 as a special exit payment, along with other transitional assistance, to eligible irrigators on 15 hectares or less.

The short-term scheme will be available this financial year. Access to the program will be conditional on irrigators selling their water entitlement to the Commonwealth to be returned to the Basin's rivers and wetlands.

The program is expected to yield up to 48 gigalitres of water for the environment. This assistance will allow eligible small scale irrigators with permanent water entitlements of at least 10 megalitres who choose to leave irrigated farming to stay on the farm.

The Government has allocated up to \$57.1 million for this assistance to bring relief to small-scale irrigators in the Murray-Darling Basin impacted by drought and climate change who wish to exit irrigated farming but are unable to sell their farms.

This program will provide struggling small irrigators – many of whom have been carrying on farming enterprises that were established by their families several generations ago – with an opportunity to exit the sector while remaining in their family homes.

Many of these irrigators live close to rural and regional centres. Staying on the farm and working nearby are real options for them.

The objective is to help these small block irrigators remain in their communities while getting out of the business of irrigation, at the same time as providing greater environmental flows to the Murray-Darling system.

In addition to the exit grant of up to \$150,000, two complementary grants will be included in the package:

- _ up to \$10,000 for advice and training, including skills development, direction setting plans, succession planning and business advice
- _ up to \$10,000 for removal of permanent plantings and other production-related infrastructure

The program will be part of the Government's Water for the Future plan, which includes \$3.1 billion for buying back water in the Basin and \$5.8 billion for infrastructure improvements and to help communities adjust to reduced water availability.

Implementation of this initiative will be linked to water reforms agreed between the Commonwealth and the States. More details for irrigators about how to access the package will be announced within the next month.

Newsprint Stories

THE WEEKLY TIMES 10th September – TOUGH TIMES CALL FOR SOME TOUGH DECISIONS

Optimism can be as scarce as rain in tough times but there is no shortage of positive thinking in a new documentary showing how farmers are coping. Titled A Step Ahead, the 20-minute DVD released by the Victorian Government involves farmers and their families discussing how they are adapting to changing conditions and not just hoping for rain. The DVD was produced by Catfish productions and executive producer Matt Dooley said his primary aim was to capture the real character of farmers.

[The Weekly Times – Tough times call for some tough decisions](#)

AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW 15th September By: Matthew Cranston – INVESTORS MOVE ON LARGE DAIRY FARMS

Better than expected prices and solid returns have resulted in a number of large-scale dairy property sales in recent weeks. The sales, predominantly in NSW and Victoria, have attracted corporate buyers keen to take advantage of high milk prices and consolidation in the industry, and are a sign of things to come, according to real estate agents who haven't seen this level of activity since the late 1990s.

[Australian Financial Review – Investors move on large dairy farms](#)

THE WEEKLY TIMES 17th September – LOCUSTS HATCH A PLOT

A locust expert has warned a looming plague could dwarf the one that tore through Victoria three years ago. Victoria's Australian Plague Locust Commissioner Andrew Tomkins said the area where egg-borne locusts had been found this year covered a massive 1.24 million hectares in northern Victoria. Mr Tomkins said this was 50 times larger than the area where eggs were laid leading up to the last plague in 2005-06.

[The Weekly Times – Locusts hatch a plot](#)

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

The Department of Human Services is working with the Victorian Government Drought Taskforce and the Department of Primary Industries to support communities affected by the prolonged period of drought.

For more information please refer to their website <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au>

Counselling Hotlines

Lifeline	131 114	Mensline	1300 78 99 78
Parentline	132 289	Kids helpline	1800 551 800

Do you know of any support available through community organisations and industry groups?

If so, please forward info through to toni.eames@dpi.vic.gov.au

REPORTS

Dry Seasonal Conditions in Rural Victoria

The DPI's Dry Seasonal Conditions (DSC) reports are produced monthly.

[DPI - Vic Dry Seasonal Conditions Report](#)

Managing Climate Risk in Rural Victoria

The Fast Break

A newsletter providing seasonal climate and risk information to the Victorian and Southern NSW cropping region.

The fast Break has received much acclaim and provides two pages of graphics and model summaries saving you hours of download time.

You will find the latest copy as an attachment to this newsletter.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list please contact Dale Grey dale.grey@dpi.vic.gov.au

SUPPORT INITIATIVES

Exceptional Circumstances (EC)

Fact sheets, maps of areas covered by EC declarations and the relevant dates can be viewed at the [Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry](#)

To access EC support farmers need a certificate that their farm is in an eligible area. These are available via [Centrelink Drought Assistance](#) on 132 316.

For information on EC income support contact [Centrelink Drought Assistance](#) (external link) on 132 316.

Financial Counselling

Financial counselling is available from one of Victoria's Rural Financial Counselling services.

Rural Financial Counsellors can provide free, independent financial assessment for farming families and small rural businesses. This includes services for people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

For a list of Rural Financial Counsellors in your area contact DPI on 136 186 or visit [Rural Financial Counsellors - Victoria](#)

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

The [Drought Assistance Guide](#) is the latest (Feb08) summary of drought assistance measures provided by the Australian, State and Territory Governments.

If you have not yet seen it, this a great guide to refer to.

This and other helpful drought publications can be accessed on the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry website via the following link [DAFF - Drought publications](#).

KEY CONTACTS

Local Government Key Drought Contacts

To access contact details for a wider range of service providers in your local area please contact your Local Government Drought representative or follow the links to view your shires homepage.

Shire (<i>click on link to access website</i>)	Key Drought Contact (<i>click on name to email</i>)	Office number
Alpine Shire	Jan Mock , Community & Economic Recovery Officer	03 5755 0555
Benalla Rural City	Kim Scanlon , Drought Coordinator	03 5761 2247
City of Greater Shepparton	Janet Congues , Drought Recovery Officer	03 5832 9700
Indigo Shire	Sally MCCarron , Health & Wellbeing Manager	03 5728 8020
Mansfield Shire	Kevin Murphy , Senior Environmental Health Officer	03 5775 8544
Mitchell Shire	Rob McVernon , General Manager Community & Recreation	03 5734 6252
Moirā Shire	Sally Rice , Community Development Officer Kaye Thomson , Manager Community Development	03 5871 9222
Murrindindi Shire	Tammy Fallon , Executive Assistant	03 5786 1522
Rural City of Wangaratta	Ann Heywood , Executive Manager – Community & Social Planning	03 5722 0807
Strathbogie Shire	Caroline Harlow , Drought Coordinator	03 5795 0000
Towong Shire	Gerard Van Emmerik , Manager Community Services	02 6071 5100
City of Wodonga	Debbie Mackinlay , Recovery Manager	02 6022 9300

DHS Supported Counsellors/Outreach Workers in the Hume Region

Area Covered	Counsellor Name	Contact number
Indigo, Towong, Wodonga	Naomi Mason, UHCHS	02 6022 8888
Alpine, Benalla, Mansfield, Wangaratta	Ruth Malpass Jane Rushworth	03 5723 4000
Moirā (Nathalia focus)	Rachel Robertson	0427 840 430
Moirā	Jackie Star	03 5743 3200
Shepparton, (Strathbogie and Mitchell in emergency)	Terry Reed	03 5823 7000
Area Covered	Outreach Worker Name	Contact number
Strathbogie (Violet Town focus), Benalla	Ivan Lister	0407 856 374

GP Division contacts

Area covered	GP Division	Contact
Moirā (west end)	Murray Plains	Ruth Turpin 0412 966 778
Wodonga	Border	Mark Williams 02 60 491 900
Towong, Alpine, Wangaratta, Benalla, Mansfield, Strathbogie (east side), Murrindindi, Moirā (east end)	North East	Les Hume 0448 885 853
Mitchell	Central Highlands	5428 4848
Shepparton Strathbogie (west side)	Goulburn Valley	5831 5399