

June 2024

Dry seasons support for farmers

Agriculture Victoria continues to monitor seasonal conditions across the state.

Conditions have remained dry over much of the state since February. Predictions are mixed for most parts of Victoria, however, indicators for South-west Victoria are suggesting much drier conditions.

The Bureau of Meteorology and other global climate models currently forecast likely warmer minimum and maximum temperatures over the coming months.

Most models predict both a La Nina and a positive Indian Ocean Dipole to form in winter 2024. This is rare and indicates an uncertain outlook, with both wetter and drier conditions possible.

The Victorian Government supports farmers to prepare for and respond to dry seasonal conditions and drought.

The following ongoing services are available to support farmers.

Farm Business Support

Technical support, resources and events

Agriculture Victoria is working with Victorian farmers to deliver technical information and decision-making support to plan ahead and make early informed decisions for managing dry seasonal conditions. Topics include:

- drought planning
- assessing pasture resources
- measuring feed on offer
- stock containment areas
- tools for making rations.

For more information visit:

- agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons
- agriculture.vic.gov.au/events.

Farm Business Resilience Program

The Farm Business Resilience Program is supporting farmers to develop knowledge and skills to improve their farm business and manage the impacts of drought and a changing climate.

The program supports farmers to improve skills and management practices around 4 key areas:

- Business planning and risk management
- Farm finances and profitable decision making
- Managing people on farm, farm safety and wellbeing
- Climate adaptation and natural resource management including soil, water, crops and pastures.

The program is delivered through short courses, workshops, webinars, field days or farms walks, tailored to suit the needs of farmers and community groups. Farmers are supported to develop or update their farm business plan and take action towards achieving their business goals.

The Farm Business Resilience Program is jointly funded through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund and the Victorian Government's Future Agriculture Skills Capacity Fund.

For more information about the Farm Business Resilience Program visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/FBRP, or visit the Dairy Australia [Our Farm, Our Plan web page](#) for information about the dairy program.

Farmers and service providers are encouraged to subscribe to the [Resilience and Recovery digital newsletter](#) to access latest events and information.

Rural Financial Counselling Service

The Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) offers free, confidential and independent financial information, options, decision-making support and referral services to farmers and small, related rural businesses who are in, or at risk of, financial hardship.

A Rural Financial Counsellor can visit farmers at their place of business and can assist with business planning, creditor negotiation, cash flow management, accessing government and industry support programs and referrals to other professional services.

To connect with your closest service call **1300 771 774** or visit rfcsnetwork.com.au.

Farm Household Allowance

Farmers in financial hardship may be eligible for the Commonwealth Government's **Farm Household Allowance (FHA)**, a fortnightly payment available for up to four years in a specific 10-year period.

More information on the **Farm Household Allowance** is available at servicesaustralia.gov.au and search for 'Farm Household Assistance'. A rural financial counsellor can help farmers to understand eligibility and apply for the FHA.

Regional Investment Corporation

Farmers may be able to access low-interest loans through the Commonwealth Government's **Regional Investment Corporation (RIC)**. More information about the low interest loans process is available from the **Regional Investment Corporation**. Call **1800 875 675**, email info@ric.gov.au or visit ric.gov.au.

Farmer Assistance Hotline

Contact the Farmer Assistance Hotline on **132 316** to find out about Australian Government support services available to farmers and rural communities.

Business Victoria

The [Business Victoria website](#) has information and resources to support businesses including currently available [grants and programs](#). Visit business.vic.gov.au.

Personal wellbeing support

National Centre for Farmer Health

The National Centre for Farmer Health is supporting primary producers through the delivery of initiatives to boost farmer mental health and wellbeing, including:

- Distribution of mental health resources and support information
- '[Managing Stress on the Farm](#)' book explores the common causes of stressors on farms and offers practical ways to deal with them. It also includes the Steering Straight plan, to help individuals manage their mental health with practical, useful steps.

More information is available on the [National Centre for Farmer Health website](#).

GPs and community health care providers

If in need of support during difficult times, visit your local Doctor (GP).

Community health services also provide a range of primary health care services that could include acute hospital care, medical centre, home and community care, district nursing, women's health, allied health services (podiatry, occupational therapy etc.), counselling, pharmacy, referrals.

Contact your GP or local Community Health service.

Rural Flying Doctor Service – Flying Doctor Wellbeing

Flying Doctor Wellbeing is a free mental health and wellbeing service for people in rural and remote Victorian communities.

More information is available at [Flying Doctor Wellbeing](#)

Contacts: email wellbeing@rfd.vic.gov.au or call 1330 363 3222 (Gippsland) or 03 8412 0480

Personal wellbeing contacts

National Centre for Farmer Health	Support resources and services for emotional and social wellbeing, farm business support, information for rural and health professionals, rural support organisations.	Call (03) 5551 8533 farmerhealth.org.au
Australian Red Cross	For people affected by Victorian Severe Weather and Flood.	1800 733 276 redcross.org.au/
Lifeline	24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services.	131 114 lifeline.org.au
Beyondblue	24/7 telephone information and support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health.	1300 224 636 beyondblue.org.au
MensLine Australia	24/7 service for men with relationship and family concerns.	1300 78 99 78 mensline.org.au

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Family Relationship Service	Providing families with access to information about family relationship issues.	1800 050 321 familyrelationships.gov.au
Mental Health Care Plan	Provides Medicare rebates for up to 10 individual or 10 group appointments per year with a psychologist, occupational therapist or social worker.	Contact your GP for a referral healthdirect.gov.au/mental-health-care-plan
Kids Helpline	Confidential telephone counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25.	1800 551 800 kidshelpline.com.au/
Parentline	Counselling and information for families with children up to 18 years. Open 8am to midnight, seven days.	132 289 parentline.com.au/
NURSE-ON-CALL	Expert health information and advice (14 hours, 7 days)	1300 60 60 24
Rural Aid	Rural Aid offers free, confidential counselling to Rural Aid registered farmers and their families. Rural Aid also provides critical support to farmers affected by natural disaster through financial, water, fodder and volunteer assistance.	1300 327 624 contact@ruralaid.org.au www.ruralaid.org.au/
Better Health Channel	Health and medical information that is quality assured, reliable, up to date, easy to understand, regularly reviewed and locally relevant.	betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Government and agency contacts

Agriculture Victoria

Agriculture Services	Agriculture Services works with farmers and industry to prepare for dry seasonal conditions. from	136 186 recovery@agriculture.vic.gov.au
Technical information	The Agriculture Victoria website has a wide of range of information and guidance on issues such as animal welfare, drought planning, assessing pasture resources, measuring feed on offer, stock containment areas and tools for making rations.	www.agriculture.vic.gov.au

Local government

Local Councils	Find contact details for your local shire council	https://www.vic.gov.au/know-your-council
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Water corporations and services

15 water corporations provide water supply (including recycled water) and sewerage and trade waste disposal services to customers throughout Victoria.

Barwon Water	1300 656 007 info@barwonwater.vic.gov.au
Central Highlands Water	1800 061 514 customer.enquiries@chw.net.au
Coliban Water	1300 363 200 coliban@coliban.com.au
East Gippsland Water	1800 671 841 egw@egwater.vic.gov.au
Gippsland Water	1800 050 500 www.gippswater.com.au/contact-us
Goulburn Valley Water	1800 454 500 mail@gvwater.vic.gov.au
Lower Murray Water	1800 808 830 contactus@lmw.vic.gov.au
North East Water	1300 361 644 info@newater.com.au
South Gippsland Water	1300 851 636 sgwater@sgwater.com.au
Wannon Water	1300 926 666 info@wannonwater.com.au
Westernport Water	1800 249 090 westport@westernportwater.com.au

Four of the water corporations provide rural water services which comprise of water supply, drainage and salinity mitigation services for irrigation, domestic and stock purposes.

Southern Rural Water	1300 139 510 srw@srw.com.au
Goulburn-Murray Water	1800 064 184 reception@gmwater.com.au
Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water	1300 659 961 info@gmwwater.org.au
Lower Murray Water	1800 808 830 contactus@lmw.vic.gov.au

Catchment Management Authorities

Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) are responsible for the integrated planning and coordination of land, water and biodiversity management in each catchment and land protection regions. These 10 authorities have the lead role in developing and delivering regional programs for waterway management.

Corangamite CMA	1800 002 262 info@ccma.vic.gov.au
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East Gippsland CMA	03 5152 0600 reception@egcma.com.au
Glenelg Hopkins CMA	03 5571 2526 ghcma@ghcma.vic.gov.au
Goulburn Broken CMA	03 5822 7700 reception@gbcma.vic.gov.au
Mallee CMA	03 5001 8600 reception@malleecma.com.au
North Central CMA	03 5448 7124 info@nccma.vic.gov.au
North East CMA	1300 216 513 necma@necma.vic.gov.au
Melbourne Water (formerly Port Phillip and Westernport CMA)	131 722 enquiry@melbournewater.com.au
Wimmera CMA	03 5382 1544 wcma@wcma.vic.gov.au
West Gippsland CMA	1300 094 262 www.wgcma.vic.gov.au/about-us/contact-us