



Media release, for immediate release

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR DROUGHT AFFECTED AG SECTOR

Farmers, farm workers and agricultural business employees impacted by the ongoing drought conditions in the south west can now apply to be part of the Catchment Management Authority (CMA) Drought Employment Program.

The Victorian government funded program, delivered in the Glenelg Hopkins and Corangamite CMA regions, provides meaningful off-farm employment opportunities for people who have had their people experiencing hardship because of dry conditions – either through reduced hours, profitability or loss of employment – to take on a role with their CMA over the next 12 months.

Glenelg Hopkins CMA CEO Adam Bester said the program enables not only drought affected workers to be employed but gives their usual employers time to get back on their feet.

“Employers of participating farmers will get a break from paying their wages without losing them as employees, because once the program is complete, they will still be locally based. The program will be flexible, offering a range of part time or full time roles depending on what suits applicants best,” he said.

Corangamite CMA CEO Amber Clarke said the Drought Employment Program will play an important role in supporting farmers and community who are doing it tough while helping to deliver environmental outcomes on the ground in both regions.

“Like previous successful CMA Drought Employment Programs, this program provides a way for people to earn an income, apply their skills and build confidence in future employment opportunities by undertaking a range of different catchment health works – like riparian fencing, pest and weed control and revegetation,” she said.

Minister for Water Gayle Tierney announced the Drought Employment Program as part of the \$144 million support package developed through the Premier’s Drought Response Taskforce.

A total of \$1m is available for the Catchment Management Authority-led Drought Employment Programs in the south west, where drought conditions have been the most severe over a long period of time.

The Drought Employment Program will support those looking to access off-farm income while conditions are difficult, bringing forward essential local environmental and waterway improvement works at priority sites.

The Program will be available for farmers or farm-dependent workers from 11 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in south west Victoria including Ararat, Moyne, Colac Otway, Pyrenees, Corangamite, Southern Grampians, Glenelg, Surf Coast, Golden Plains, Warrnambool, City of Greater Geelong and southern parts of West Wimmera.

Eligible local farmers and farm workers can now express interest in being part of the program ahead of a recruitment process via www.ccma.vic.gov.au (Corangamite CMA region) or www.ghcma.vic.gov.au (Glenelg Hopkins CMA region).

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