



Supporting **small business** operators severely affected by drought

New Australian Government assistance for drought-affected small business operators

The Australian Government has improved drought assistance for farmers in areas severely affected by drought and introduced new assistance for the agricultural dependent small businesses that rely on them. These measures recognise the unprecedented severity, length and extent of the current drought, and its impact on rural and regional communities, the environment, and the broader Australian economy.

Access to support for small business

The Small Business Drought Assistance package extends Exceptional Circumstances income and business support to eligible small business operators. Examples of businesses which may be eligible include fencing contractors, contract harvesters, seed, feed and fertiliser suppliers, livestock transporters and shearing contractors and suppliers of farm machinery and equipment.

To be eligible, small business operators must:

- source a minimum 70 per cent of their usual turnover from the provision of goods and services for farming activities in Exceptional Circumstance declared areas
- employ up to 100 full time equivalent staff
- have experienced a significant downturn as a result of the drought
- contribute a significant part of their labour and capital to the business and derive a significant part of their income from the business
- be an Australian resident or have permission to stay permanently in Australia, and
- have a current Australian Business Number and carry out commercial activities.

Other eligibility criteria may apply to different programmes. Eligible small business operators can now access the same support as farmers under the Exceptional Circumstances programme. This assistance takes two forms; income support and business support. Income support, or the Small Business Income Support Payment, is provided through Centrelink as a fortnightly payment. Business support, or the Small Business Interest Rate Subsidy, is administered by the state and territory rural assistance authorities.

Where can I get further information?

Further details about the Small Business Drought Assistance package are available through the Drought Assistance Hotline on **13 23 16** or visit the Centrelink website at **www.centrelink.gov.au**

For information about the Small Business Interest Rate Subsidy contact your state or territory rural assistance authority through **www.daff.gov.au/droughtassist** or telephone numbers are listed below:

New South Wales: NSW Rural Assistance Authority:
1800 331 126

South Australia: Primary Industry and Resources
South Australia: 180 20 20

Queensland: QRAA: 1800 623 946

Victoria: Rural Finance Corporation of Victoria:
03 5448 2600

Western Australia: Rural Business Development
Corporation: 1800 198 231