

# South Australia's Guide to Drought Assistance Measures

## Summary



The Australian and South Australian Governments have packaged together a number of drought assistance measures for irrigators, dryland farmers and small businesses severely affected by the drought. This summary of the drought assistance measures available is a reference guide for all South Australians affected by the drought.

**Current  
January 2008**

### Key to locating measures

-  Financial Support
-  Business Mangement Support
-  Health & Wellbeing
-  Community Support & Networks
-  Workforce Skilling
-  Schooling & Education

### Symbols used

-  Australian Government measure
-  SA Government measure

Financial Support		
<b>EC Relief Payments</b> Benefit: up to \$775.60 per fortnight for a couple	Income support, called EC Relief Payments, assists eligible farm families and small businesses who are experiencing difficulties meeting basic living expenses due to the impact of EC.	<i>Drought Assistance Hotline</i> 13 23 16
<b>EC Interest Rate Subsidies</b> Benefit: up to \$100,000 per year	Interest rate subsidy to eligible farm businesses and small businesses that are in financial difficulty due to the impact of EC.	<i>PIRSA</i> 1800 182 235
<b>EC Exit Package</b> Benefit: up to \$170,000	Assistance to those who wish to exit the industry. Open to all eligible primary producers in EC declared areas, considering leaving the land. Includes an exit grant, advice, retraining and relocation support. Distinct from 'Farm Help'.	<i>Drought Assistance Hotline</i> 13 23 16
<b>Farm Help</b> Benefit: up to \$80,500 per family	Helps farmers improve financial performance, find sources of off-farm income, or to re-establish outside farming. Includes a re-establishment grant, and advice & training grant.	<i>Centrelink Farmer Assistance Helpline</i> 1800 050 585
<b>Mortgage stamp duty relief</b> Benefit: varies	Relief from mortgage stamp duty for producers needing to extend finance as a result of the drought.	www.revenuesa.sa.gov.au
<b>SA CWA emergency food vouchers</b> Benefit: up to \$500 / household	Food vouchers for use at IGA and Woolworths supermarkets for families in need, provided by the South Australian CWA Emergency Aid Fund.	<i>CWA</i> 08 8332 4166

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Financial Support		
<b>Concessions and remissions</b> Benefit: varies	Concessions & remissions for energy costs & school fees including access to school card for families impacted by the drought conditions.	<i>Concessions Hotline</i> 1800 307 758 <i>DECS School Card</i> 1800 672 758
<b>Water transfer fees</b> Benefit: \$324.00 fees waived per application	For River Murray licence holders who buy in water for 2007-08 only to 'top up' water access to a level that is less than or equal to their licensed water allocation on 1 July 2007.	<a href="http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au">www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au</a> 08 8595 2053
<b>Ex gratia payments</b> Benefit: varies	To offset 50% of the NRM water levy for River Murray licence holders.	<a href="http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au">www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au</a> 08 8595 2053
<b>Tax relief</b> Benefit: varies	For those whose income is made in drought affected areas, provides more time to pay tax debts; instalment payments without interest charges; & measures such as deductions on water facilities.	<i>Australian Tax Office</i> 13 11 42 option 3
<b>Youth Allowance</b> Benefit: up to \$456 per fortnight	Students whose parents are receiving an EC Relief Payment are exempt from the Youth Allowance Parental Means Test and may be entitled to the maximum payment rate.	<i>Drought Assistance Hotline</i> 13 23 16
<b>Health Care card</b> Benefit: various concessions	Those in receipt of EC Relief Payments may obtain health concessions such as cheaper prescriptions, as well as household, educational, recreational and transport services.	<i>Drought Assistance Hotline</i> 13 23 16
<b>Freeholding perpetual leases</b> Benefit: varies	Financial relief to farmers in drought affected areas who are part of the accelerated free holding project (PLAF), by postponing payment deadlines according to individual needs.	<a href="http://www.environment.sa.gov.au">www.environment.sa.gov.au</a>
<b>Farm debt mediation</b> Benefit: up to \$2,000	For primary producers in drought affected areas, who need the assistance of an independent mediator to negotiate with their bank, after having followed the Farm Finance Strategy.	<i>PIRSA</i> 1800 182 235

Business Management Support		
<b>Professional Advice &amp; Planning Grants</b> Benefit: up to \$5,500	Provides eligible farmers and irrigators in EC declared areas, access to professional advice and planning assistance to help manage through the drought and plan for recovery.	<i>Drought Assistance Hotline</i> 13 23 16
<b>Planning for Recovery Grants</b> Benefit: up to \$14,000	For those in receipt of EC interest rate subsidies. Up to \$4,000 for expert support in preparing a farm drought recovery plan, up to \$5,000 for immediate eligible works, and up to a further \$5,000 on completion of their plan.	<i>PIRSA</i> 1800 182 235
<b>Financial counselling</b> Benefit: a free service	The Rural Financial Counselling Service provides free, confidential rural financial counselling to primary producers, fishers and small rural businesses.	<i>Rural Financial Counselling Service SA</i> 1800 836 211
<b>FarmBis AAA</b> Benefit: up to 65% of training cost	Producers can improve their business and risk management skills with subsidies of up to 65% towards the eligible cost of training.	<i>PIRSA</i> 1800 182 235
<b>Technical advice &amp; information workshops</b>	A range of technical advice & information to assist farmers and irrigators with tools to enable management of their farm, their finances and their family through the drought towards recovery. Check the Hotlines & SA Droughtlink Website for current schedule.	<i>SA Drought Hotline</i> 180 20 20 <i>Murray-Darling Basin Assistance &amp; Referral</i> 1800 050 015
<b>Irrigation Management Grants</b> Benefit: up to \$20,000	To help eligible Murray-Darling Basin irrigators to undertake a range of activities that respond to temporarily reduced water allocations and improve on-farm practices to maximise production from the available water.	<i>Murray-Darling Basin Assistance &amp; Referral Line</i> 1800 050 015

### Business Management Support

<p><b>The Living Murray – options for irrigators</b> Benefit: market rates for water</p>	<p>River Murray water entitlement holders may sell their water allocation to the government for holding on the Living Murray Environmental Water Licence, by choosing from 2 options: (1) the sale of a portion of water entitlement negotiated at the current market rate; (2) the sale of full water entitlement in the case of an exit from industry, negotiated at the current market rate.</p>	<p><i>Peter O'Neill DWLBC</i> 8463 6901</p>
<p><b>AusIndustry</b></p>	<p>AusIndustry is the Australian Government's business program delivery division in the Department of Innovation, Industry and Research. AusIndustry delivers a range of more than 35 programs - including innovation grants, tax and duty concessions, small business skills development, industry support and venture capital.</p>	<p><i>Ausindustry Hotline</i> 13 28 46  www.ausindustry.gov.au</p>

### Health & Wellbeing

<p><b>Personal counselling</b> Benefit: help &amp; support</p>	<p>Helping people deal with crisis situations in a way that maintains dignity and encourages self-reliance. Includes social and emotional counselling services for individuals and families affected by the drought, as well as community activities and social support, by Family Relationships Services. Psychologists &amp; social workers provide personal &amp; telephone counselling services, through Centrelink Customer Service Centres.</p>	<p><i>Family Relationship Advice Line</i> 1800 050 321  <i>Drought Assistance Hotline</i> 13 23 16</p>
<p><b>Community counselling</b> Benefit: help &amp; support</p>	<p>Rural community counsellors provide confidential counselling services to community members directly affected by the drought. The service provides basic mental health capacity building to take care of social and emotional well being.</p>	<p><i>SA Drought Hotline</i> 180 20 20</p>
<p><b>'Just Ask' rural mental health</b> Benefit: help &amp; support</p>	<p>Information service and referral for people with mental health issues, as well as to concerned friends and relatives. Also provides callers with information about relevant local services and self-help tool kits, as well as links to books and websites.</p>	<p><i>Lifeline</i> 1300 131 114</p>
<p><b>Mental health support</b> Benefit: help &amp; support</p>	<p>Services and tools to assist farmers &amp; irrigators managing their businesses and coping with stress: includes books and online resources and personal counselling support.</p>	<p><i>Rural &amp; Remote Mental Health Services</i> 13 14 65</p>

### Community Support & Networks

<p><b>Community Support Grants</b> Benefit: up to \$5,000</p>	<p>For rural communities to stage activities specifically for building resilience and coping with the drought.</p>	<p><i>PIRSA</i> 1800 182 235</p>
<p><b>Drought Bus information tours</b></p>	<p>Drought bus mobile offices are travelling drought affected areas to inform and assist individuals with EC support and other forms of assistance available from the Australian Government.</p>	<p><i>Drought Assistance Hotline</i> 13 23 16</p>
<p><b>Regional Communities Drought Fund</b> Benefit: up to \$100,000 on a dollar for dollar basis including in-kind contribution</p>	<p>One-off grants to assist regional communities to develop their economic and social infrastructure, strengthen community capacity through education and training, and protect or improve local environmental assets. Community/business groups are encouraged to work with local councils to develop projects and applications. See Guidelines for more information.</p>	<p><i>PIRSA</i> 1800 182 235</p>
<p><b>Farmer Peer Support Network</b></p>	<p>A program to assist key farmers and community members to provide supportive and mentoring roles to others in their region.</p>	<p><i>Country Health</i> 8648 7888</p>

## Community Support & Networks

<b>Young Farmers Package</b> Benefit: travel & support costs	A rural leadership program targeting up to 20 leaders in drought affected regions to become mentors for their community & strengthen community capacity among younger farmers.	<i>SA Drought Hotline</i> 180 20 20
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## Workforce Skilling

<b>Job Search</b>	National vacancy database for jobs notification. For EC declared areas, immediate access to Intensive Support job search training providing one on one assistance to help find employment.	<i>Job Seeker Hotline</i> 13 62 68
<b>Drought Force</b> Benefit: Newstart/Youth Allowance plus extra \$20.80 a fortnight & up to \$1,600 training credits	Gives people who lose their job because of the drought the opportunity to work on properties or in the community. People receiving income support who work 30 hours or more a week, do not have to look for work while participating in the program.	<i>Drought Force Hotline</i> 1800 004 226
<b>Declared Drought Area Apprenticeship Incentive</b> Benefit: up to \$3,000	To encourage primary producers and small businesses, with EC Drought Declared Area certificates, to continue skills development through apprenticeships. Applies to Certificate II rural, agriculture and horticulture Australian Apprenticeships.	<i>Australian Apprenticeships</i> 1800 639 629
<b>SA Drought Apprenticeship Retention Program</b> Benefit: up to \$1,500 / apprentice	Employers in declared drought-affected areas can apply for payments for apprentices and trainees enrolled in selected rural, horticultural, and mechanical trades that support agricultural production, as well as electrical and plumbing trades.	<i>Traineeship &amp; Apprenticeships Services</i> 1800 673 097
<b>Labour Market Transition Program</b>	Training for regional people who derive 75% of their revenue from primary production. Areas covered will be forklift, front end loader, heavy vehicle and dump truck licenses. Initially focussed in Eyre Peninsula and Riverland regions.	<i>TAFESA</i> 8372 6802
<b>Skills Vouchers</b> Benefit: up to \$3,000 Work skills voucher; and up to \$500 Business Skills voucher	There are two vouchers on offer to help cover the cost of specific types of training: a Work Skills Voucher to improve the basic skills of Australians currently in the workforce or looking for work who have no formal qualifications; and a Business Skills Voucher to assist apprentices to achieve the long-term benefits of running a business.	<i>Australian Skills Vouchers Programme</i> 13 38 73 <a href="http://www.skillsvouchers.dest.gov.au">www.skillsvouchers.dest.gov.au</a>

## Schooling & Education

<b>School expenses</b> Benefit: \$150 per student	Students from drought affected families are able to access benefits through School Card to assist with educational expenses.	<i>DECS School Card</i> 1800 672 758
<b>Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC)</b> Benefit: \$1,000	An additional \$1,000 to the AIC Additional Boarding Allowance, and an ongoing supplementary allowance of \$1,000 for students who receive an AIC Distance Education Allowance.	<i>AIC Hotline</i> 13 23 18
<b>Drought Assistance for schools</b> Benefit: up to \$10,000 per year	Additional funding rural and remote schools in Exceptional Circumstances declared areas, to assist with ongoing education expenses and the cost of educational activities such as excursions.	<i>Capital Policy &amp; Rural Education Section</i> 1300 363 079
<b>Mental health training in schools</b>	Assist teachers recognise / respond to early signs of mental health issues of students.	<i>SA Drought Hotline</i> 180 20 20

Businesses, community and various industry bodies have a range of drought-specific assistance measures and grants available. You can seek more information by contacting these organisations directly, or by visiting their websites.

Note: This information has been produced for the assistance of the SA rural community. Every effort has been made to collate correct information.

Detailed information specific to individual circumstances should be sought directly from the service providers.

This is not an exhaustive list, and is current as at 22/1/2008. Prepared by the PIRSA Drought Response Support Team.

Further copies of the Drought Assistance Measures Summary can be downloaded from [www.service.sa.gov.au/drought.asp](http://www.service.sa.gov.au/drought.asp)