Natural Disaster Grants Primary Producer

NSW BUSHFIRES from 31 August 2019

Local Government Areas affected:

Armidale, Ballina, Bellingen, Byron, Clarence Valley, Coffs Harbour, Glen Innes Severn, Inverell, Kempsey, Kyogle, Lismore, Mid-Coast, Nambucca, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Richmond Valley, Tenterfield, Tweed, and Walcha

Declared: 24 November 2019.
Closing date for applications and claims: 24 May 2020.

Local Government Areas affected (extension)

Blue Mountains, Lithgow, Hawkesbury, Cessnock, Central Coast, Singleton

Declared: 18 December 2019.
Closing date for applications and claims: 18 June 2020.

Local Government Areas affected (extension)

Wingecarribee

Declared: 23 December 2019.
Closing date for applications and claims: 23 June 2020.

Local Government Areas affected (extension)

Bega Valley, Eurobodalla, Queanbeyan-Palerang, Shoalhaven, Snowy Monaro, Snowy Valleys and Mid-Western

Declared: 3 January 2020.
Closing date for applications and claims: 3 July 2020.

1. Description

In severe circumstances, grants may be provided to eligible primary producers to contribute towards the costs of:

a) clean-up, removal of debris and disposal of dead livestock;

b) repair or replacement (purchase or hire/lease) of damaged assets such as farm buildings and essential plant and equipment (excluding housing).

c) salvaging crops, health maintenance of livestock and poultry; and

d) fencing, pasture restoration, and infrastructure (including access and internal roads).

2. Assistance Available

A grant of up to $15,000 per farm business is available to all eligible primary producers for clean-up and immediate restoration costs.

3. Eligible Events

This assistance measure is only provided to eligible primary producers, following the declaration of a Natural Disaster and announcement of recovery grants, by the NSW Government.

This assistance measure is only provided in the event of Natural Disasters that have severely affected communities, regions or sectors.

4. Who is Eligible

When activated, grants are available to primary producers who meet the following criteria:

e) You are a property owner, share-farmer or lessee in the grazing industry (as confirmed by your Land and Stock Return).

f) Your business operates as a sole trader, partnership, trust or private company and trades agricultural products.

g) You have suffered direct damage as a result of the specified event.

h) The business is registered with the Australian Taxation Office as a primary producer, and has an Australian Business Number (ABN).

i) As the owner and operator, you earn more than 50% of your gross income from your primary production business under normal seasonal circumstances.

5. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible, Primary Producers must:

a) Have been operating a farm business within an eligible area, prior to the date of the event.

b) Be intending to re-establish the primary production business.

c) In the instance of a mixed business, the farmer must run a mixed primary production business where the applicant derives at least 50% of their income from primary production when looking at all sources of primary production together. In addition, for the type of production for which grants are sought, the applicant must demonstrate that they operate a bona-fide commercial operation rather than undertaking a hobby.

d) Be claiming for damage or the portion of damage that is not covered by insurance.

e) Provide confirmation that a claim against their insurance policy in respect of any loss or damage suffered has been lodged. Full insurance details, including policy numbers, are to be provided with the application. Damage that is covered by insurance is not eligible.

f) Invoices submitted with the application may not be used to secure funding under any other Government Scheme.

6. Eligible Primary Production Business

A primary producer is defined in the *Rural Assistance Act 1989* as, dairy farming, poultry farming, bee farming, and pastoral, horticultural or grazing operations.

7. Eligible Costs

The following costs are eligible:

a) Replacement pasture and fertiliser

b) Repair & replacement of equipment including pumps (must be listed on depreciation schedule)

c) Disposal & removal of dead animals

d) Purchase of fodder & feed supplements.

e) Fencing

f) Internal roads

g) Dam walls

h) Creek crossings, causeways and gullies

i) General Earthworks (repair only)

j) Small motors

k) Removal of debris and surface debris off crops

l) Posts and trellises for vines.

8. Ineligible Costs

The following costs are ineligible:

a) Sprays or chemicals

b) Loss of income

c) Damage to dwellings

d) Damages that are covered by insurance

e) Own labour (including existing staff and own equipment)

f) Fuel

g) Capital items purchased after the date of the natural disaster.

h) Upgrades/ improvements of damaged areas

i) Animal husbandry

j) Vehicles

k) Replacement fruit trees.

9. Fraudulent claims

a) By signing the claim form, you are declaring that the information provided in the application form and supporting documentation is true and accurate.

b) Providing inaccurate, untrue or misleading information may be a breach of criminal law for which serious penalties may apply.

c) If any information provided in an application or supporting documentation is found to be inaccurate, untrue or misleading, legal action may be taken against you, including action to recover the funds.

10. Important Information

a) Guidelines are correct at the time of publishing.

b) RAA reserves the right to amend, alter or change these guidelines at any time, and it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that they check the relevant website prior to application.

c) The guidelines that apply to your application will be the guidelines that are current at the time your application is received by RAA.

d) While RAA has taken all care in preparing these guidelines, RAA will not be liable in any way for any errors, omissions or variation to information in these guidelines or for not advising an applicant of any errors, omissions or variations to information in these guidelines.

11. Assessment

a) Applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria. RAA reserves the right to request further information from you or from any business or individual you have engaged, to assist in assessing your application and to verify any information provided in your application.

b) Failure to provide such information may result in RAA refusing your application.

c) RAA also reserves the right to refuse an application, at its discretion, for any reason or for no reason irrespective of whether the eligibility criteria have been met.

d) Applications submitted may be subject to audit by RAA or its agents in order to determine compliance with scheme guidelines.

12. Applications

a) Applications for assistance under the program must be made on RAA's application form and be accompanied by the documentation stated in the application form.

b) Applications and all claims, must be lodged on or before the closing dates as shown at: https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance/declared-natural-disasters

c) You will need to provide the Authority with tax invoices for claims dated after 31 August 2019 for damages incurred.

d) You will be expected to provide a range of supporting documentation, including the latest local council rate notice; latest available Tax Return and Financial Statement for your farm business and complete copies of personal Tax Returns for each member of the farm business. You should also include personal taxation returns for all beneficiaries of trusts and all Directors/Shareholders of a company where other entities are involved. Applicants who have received funding from the RAA within the last 12 months may not need to provide tax returns and financial statements again.

e) Complete applications will be assessed in order of receipt. Incomplete applications will not enter the assessment queue until all required information is provided.

f) Applicants should note that past financial assistance under this program or any other program is not a reliable indicator of eligibility for future financial assistance under this program.

g) Before applying for financial assistance under this program, applicants should seek advice from their legal, business and/or financial advisers about the implications of this assistance, for them.

To fast-track the assessment of your application and claims, you are encouraged to apply online at:

https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/grants/disaster-recovery-grants

You can also lodge completed application forms including required documentation with the NSW Rural Assistance Authority by the following methods:

Email: rural.assist@raa.nsw.gov.au

Post: Locked Bag 23, Orange NSW 2800

If you have difficulty understanding or completing the form you should seek the assistance of your rural/financial counsellor, business advisor, accountant or a trusted family member/friend.

Language Services (Interpreting and Translating) are available by contacting Multicultural NSW on 1300 651 500 or by visiting languageservices@multicultural.nsw.gov.au