

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT *With Hooper Accountants*

The Australian Government has announced significant changes to boost financial and social support for farming communities across the country, particularly those experiencing drought.

Farm Household Allowance

Eligibility:

You:

- are a farmer
- are an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- are at least 16 years of age
- have a right or interest in land and use it for a farm business.

Your farm:

- is in Australia
- has a significant commercial purpose or character.

Significant commercial purpose is assessed on:

- the purpose of your farm
- the prospect for profit
- consistency of activity
- whether your farm runs as a business
- the size, scale and permanency of your farm activity.

You must:

- contribute a significant part of your labour and capital to the farm business
- enter into a financial improvement agreement, or have one in place already.
- meet the income and assets test limits
- meet mutual obligation requirements

You can apply as a farmer, or as a farmer's partner.

Each application is assessed on a case-by-case basis.

You cannot apply for FHA if you:

- currently receive other pensions or social security benefits
- have already received the payment for 4 years
- do not meet the criteria in the guidelines.

Payment and Support:

You can get Farm Household Allowance for up to 4 years (1,460 days). This gives you time to improve your circumstances. You do not have to receive all payments in one go. You can defer your payments for future hardship.

Farm Financial Assessment:

Your case officer will talk to you about the Farm Financial Assessment. You have 28 days from the date of request to complete a Farm Financial Assessment using the Farm Financial Assessment Supplement voucher (\$1500). Many farmers use their accountant for this service - Hooper Accountants can assist.

You will receive:

- a fortnightly payment
- allowances to help you with expenses like rent, phone and medicine
- a Health Care Card, to help reduce health care costs
- funding to help you develop skills, access training and pay for professional advice (worth up \$4,000).

Fortnightly payments vary depending on your situation. They are based on social security allowances. Your payment amount will be based on the information you provide.

You will also get ongoing support from your own:

- Farm Household Case Officer (FHCO)
- Rural Financial Counsellor (RFC).

Apply:

Applications and payments are managed by the Department of Human Services.

Call the Farmer Assistance Hotline on 132 316.