

North Central Chat

Keeping you up-to-date
with Landcare and
Waterwatch news



July 2021

A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

Hi everyone,

Well didn't last month throw everything at us across Victoria- lockdown, heavy rains, flooding and windstorms all cumulating in State Emergency Service's busiest 24-hour period in history with more than 9,200 requests for assistance statewide (*Source: ABC News*).

Local attractions and natural areas including Hanging Rock continue to be temporarily closed due to storm damage. Parks Victoria and DELWP are updating their websites with park closures, and the following areas in our region remain off limits:

Parks Victoria managed area closures:

- [Hepburn Regional Park](#) (partial closure)
- [Lerderderg State Park](#) (partial closure, north of O'Briens Road only)
- Macedon Regional Park
- [Trentham Falls](#) (Coliban River Scenic Reserve)

State forest and reserve closures:

- Wombat State Forest
- Cobaw State Forest

If you are travelling around the region and into other areas of Victoria, be sure to check public land and road closures via: [Changed conditions and closures](#) (parks.vic.gov.au) and [Forest and road closures](#) (ffm.vic.gov.au).

While the clean-up continues, support is available for people seriously affected by the June storms and floods in Victoria. Visit the [Services Australia](#) website or contact on 180 22 66 for more information. Natural disasters can cause people to feel extremely overwhelmed and exhausted, if you need to talk, reach out to Lifeline Crisis Support on 131 114.



Our thoughts are with the Landcare members and residents across the Macedon Ranges who have been impacted by the June flooding and windstorms. Conversations with those affected have sung the praises of SES, CFA, local volunteers and businesses who have helped clear roads and return power, water and other essential services.

Photo: O'Brien's Rd Lerderderg State Park, Courtesy of SES Gisborne Unit

This past month has seen Victoria's Landcare program focus sharply on local facilitators. Eight expressions of interest were submitted to the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program funding round for local Landcare support staff. We eagerly await the announcement of those submissions.

The 2021 Victorian Landcare Grants have just closed for the year. During the seven-week application period, we received more than \$930,000 of grant applications from 50 Landcare and environmental volunteering groups and networks.

Finally, there are still a few weeks to get those all-important Landcare Award nominations- see page 5 for details.

Enjoy the read,

Tess Grieves

Regional Landcare Coordinator
North Central CMA

Phone: 03 5448 7124

Email: tess.grieves@nccma.vic.gov.au

Connecting rivers, landscapes, people

The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) acknowledges Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the region, their rich cultures, spiritual connection to Country.

www.nccma.vic.gov.au



News...

National Tree Day

National Tree Day started in 1996 and has grown into Australia's largest community tree-planting and nature care event.



It's a call to action for all Australians to get their hands dirty and give back to the community.

While every day should be Tree Day, we celebrate Schools Tree Day and National Tree Day on the last Friday in July, and the first Sunday in August respectively.

In 2021, **Schools Tree Day is Friday 30 July and National Tree Day is Sunday 1 August.**

The National Tree Day Team has provided further advice regarding COVID-19 restrictions and possible changes to National Tree Day.

"COVID-19 has imposed significant constraints on the way public events can be run, including the requirement to comply with physical distancing rules. Planet Ark, together with our partners, have carefully considered the expert advice available from governments and health authorities in proceeding in this manner and we will continue to monitor this into the future and advise of any changes to National Tree Day in 2021.

"We acknowledge the commitment and tireless work of the many State, Territory and regional committees, organisations, schools and individuals whose passion each year makes National Tree Day an outstanding success.

"We thank you for your understanding and for working with us during these uncertain times. Stay safe."

Activity Sheets

Fun kids activities for National Tree Day



If getting together on site isn't something your group is up for in 2021 or you're simply looking to keep the kids active during the school holidays, check out the [New NTD activity guide](#).

Join Planet Ark and other students across Australia to help protect our environment for our future. So that you can understand more about how planting trees helps our environment, the NTD Team have puzzles and games for you to enjoy! To access the activity pack, click [here](#)

Thank you Deb!

Often a quiet achiever but certainly a formidable facilitator, [Kara Kara Conservation Management Network](#) facilitator Debra Saxon-Campbell is saying farewell hanging up the boots as facilitator.

Having held the fort for more than eight years, Deb is looking forward to some much deserved rest before taking on new adventures, perhaps returning to study.

Deb said "I have really enjoyed the facilitator role in various guises over the past eight years and will miss the facilitators' quarterly get-togethers.

"The Landcare community is fairly tightknit so I'm sure we will come across each other from time to time around the traps. In the meantime, best wishes to you all and stay safe."

On behalf of the North Central Landcare team, we thank you Deb for your amazing contribution to Landcare and the Kara Kara landscape.



Bu-Ka Lo-Wurru

Article by Margie Thomas, Friends of Cornish Hill

Silence was broken on Thursday 27 May when school staff and students from Yandoit, Bullarto and the Dharma primary schools gathered at the Daylesford Community Park for the Friends of Cornish Hill's final one day workshop.

The workshop was named Bu-Ka Lo-Wurru, meaning breaking the silence. Being the first day of Reconciliation week, this gave everyone an opportunity to honour the Dja Dja Wurrung people. Believing that reconciliation is a journey for all Australians, the Friends of Cornish Hill wanted to recognise this day, to make a difference in moving forward and to break the silence which surrounds the history of loss for all First Nations people.

A Welcome to Country and Smoking ceremony was conducted by highly respected Dja Dja Elder Aunty Marilyn Nicholls after which the students worked through three rotations each with a different activity.



The activities included creating simple string and stick mobiles, discussion about the plants and animals that call Cornish Hill home as well as making models of some of these animals made from straw and bound with wool. For the final activity, each student creating their own symbol of recognition being a clay handprint made from a slurry of clay gathered from Cornish Hill.

These workshops have been a feature of the Friends work for more than five years and the hope is that local schools will take over the organisation.

From Principal of the Dharma School Jen Willis: "What an absolute delight it has been for the children of the Dharma School to participate in such engaging and rich learning experiences with the Friends of Cornish Hill. The environmental, cultural and peer learning programs that they have experienced have been such a valuable

addition to their experiential learning. We are so grateful for such a meaningful community offering."



Students enjoying the string mobile making activity.

Photo: Friends of Cornish Hill

Yorta Yorta Whole-Of-Country Plan 2021-2030

On May 28, Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation presented the Yorta Yorta Whole-of-Country Plan for 2021-2030.

YYNAC Chief Executive Officer, Monica Morgan said, "It is a document built on thousands of years of knowledge and existence in our Yorta Yorta Traditional boundary. It reflects a long struggle to have our voice reflected in the protection of our country, our people and our culture.

"I stood with my Elders under the giant red gums on the banks of the Barmah Lakes in the early 1970s listening to great Yorta Yorta Leaders that will never be with us again and they spoke of the day when Yorta Yorta Peoples will be in control of caring for our Country and culture.

"Today Yorta Yorta Nation stands with self-determining and sovereignty and we are promoting our Whole-of-Country Plan to describe our priorities and our solutions for caring for our Yenbena, Woka and Walla."

You can read the Whole-of-Country plan via: [Yorta Yorta Whole-of-Country Plan 2021-2030 – Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation \(yynac.com.au\)](https://yynac.com.au)

The information in this plan may only be used with the documented permission of Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation.

Agriculture Energy Investment Plan

The Victorian Government's Agriculture Energy Investment Plan (AEIP) has been extended to help more Victorian farmers improve their energy efficiency and overall productivity.

Applications for free on-farm energy assessments are now open until **15 July 2021**. They are eligible for farms which spend more than \$8000 per year on energy costs.

The On-Farm Energy Assessments analyse on-farm energy use (electricity, gas and diesel) and identify opportunities to:

- make energy savings
- improve output volumes per energy unit
- convert to renewable energy sources.

Following an assessment, farmers may apply for either:

- up to \$20,000 through the FastTrack Rebate to purchase items recommended through their on-farm energy assessment; or
- Tier 1 and Tier 2 grants (worth between \$20,000 – \$50,000 and \$50,000 – \$250,000) for larger projects.

Farmers are encouraged to apply early due to the popularity of the program. For more information on the program, eligibility and application process please visit the link below or attached guidelines.

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/support-and-resources/funds-grants-programs/agriculture-energy-investment-plan/on-farm-energy-assessments>

New National Parks and Reserves for Victoria

Victoria's central west will have 65,106 hectares of new National Parks further protecting the area's unique environment and giving Victorians and tourists more opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors.

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio has announced the new National Parks and reserves that will protect habitat for rare and threatened species and ensure the region remains a drawcard for recreation and tourism.

New National Parks will be created by linking existing state forests, parks and reserves. The largest will bring together Lerderderg State Park and much of the existing

Wombat State Forest to create a new national park covering more than 44,000 hectares between Daylesford and Bacchus Marsh.

A 15,000-hectare Pyrenees National Park will be created northwest of Avoca, and a 5282-hectare Mount Buangor National Park will double the size of the existing State Park north of Buangor.

New conservation parks covering 5246 hectares in areas with a high biodiversity value have also been created to protect precious flora and fauna. A further 7560 hectares are being added to expand existing nature and bushland reserves. Regional parks will be expanded by 27,735 hectares.

The government is investing in facility upgrades throughout the region, including upgrading campgrounds and new and upgraded walking trails and facilities, will continue through the \$105.6 million Victoria's *Great Outdoors* program.

The new National Parks and reserves announced on June 24 builds on the 186,000 hectares already protected from timber harvesting announced in November 2019. When logging of native forests ends in 2030 a further 1.8 million hectares of forest will be protected.



Young Greater Glider *Petauroides volans*.
Photography © Gayle Osborne

If you're interested to learn more about the creatures that call Wombat State forest home and those communities caring for it, check out the publications, videos and photographs supplied by dedicated volunteers at [Wombat Forestcare](#)



Nominations for the 2021 Victorian Landcare Awards close on 11 July.

Do you know an individual, group or organisation making a difference to the environment? If you do, nominate them for a 2021 Victorian Landcare Award.

The awards are an opportunity to acknowledge the achievements of Victorians from urban and rural communities excelling in environmental volunteering, sustainable agricultural practices, environmental protection, conservation of land and waterways, coastlines, and biodiversity.

Nominees can be from groups, networks, organisations, and individuals involved in protecting and improving their local environment. Anyone can nominate, so if you know individual or group that you think should be recognised, please nominate them for an award.

There are 15 categories open to Victorians this year. Seven of these are Victorian-only and eight are national categories

The wellbeing benefits of participating in Landcare

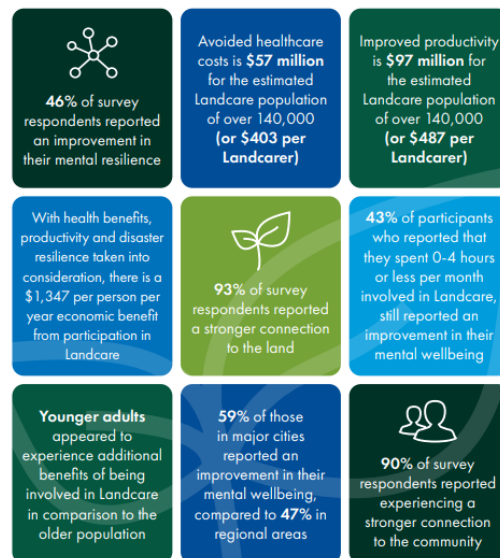
While Landcarers typically prefer grass and greenery to finance and figures, a new report published by KPMG in partnership with Landcare Australia, indicates there is a \$1,347 per person, per year economic benefit from participation in Landcare.

The June edition of Landcare Australia's Landlink explains, "For decades, those involved in Landcare have testified to a greater sense of self, both physically and mentally, resulting from an enhanced link with their local environment. This, in turn, has boosted community wellbeing and it has long been the desire of the Landcare network to quantify the significance of these benefits.

"Now, newly published findings by KPMG Australia in partnership with Landcare Australia, indicate Landcare volunteers enjoy substantial improvements to their mental and physical wellbeing – and a significant decrease to their healthcare costs. Surveying more than

1,000 Landcare volunteers and coordinators from Landcare groups, the findings in the report, titled *Building resilience in local communities: The wellbeing benefits of participating in Landcare*, suggest substantial improvements in wellbeing owing to involvement in Landcare lead to an approximate savings from avoided healthcare costs of \$403 per individual per year. "

THE WELLBEING BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN LANDCARE



Landcare Australia is urging Landcarers, groups, networks and government agencies to read and share the report throughout their networks, to help spread the word about the impactful findings.

The report also provides a wonderful infographic which summarises some of the key findings of the survey, and Landcare Australia have provided Key Report Facts on their website.



Building resilience in local communities:
The wellbeing benefits of participating in Landcare



Read the full report here: [Wellbeing Report | KPMG | Landcare Australia](#)



Communities Caring for Catchments

Hello folks,

I sit here in my home office with the rain pelting down and the fire cranking; winter has well and truly hit this week. On my daily walk I have noticed the hedge wattle (*Acacia paradoxa*) starting to flower - perhaps early - but also a reminder that spring is just around the corner (can you tell I'm not at all a fan of the cold!).



Acacia paradoxa. Photo: Ian Higgins

I hope everyone is safe and well after the recent big storm in the south of our region. I'm receiving photos from community members of some of the devastation and send my thoughts and well wishes to all those impacted.

Best wishes,

Britt Gregory

Acting Regional Waterwatch Coordinator

North Central CMA

Phone: 03 5448 7124

Email: britt.gregory@nccma.vic.gov.au



COVID-19 interrupted the rollout of school visits for a few weeks during second term, but Malmsbury PS and Kyneton PS were lucky to squeeze theirs in just before the shift to remote learning.

At Malmsbury Primary I worked with their group of 'Malmsbury Ramblers' – Grade 6 students who have chosen this specialist program of environmental learning offered by the school of which River Detectives is a part.

Rod White, CMA Project Manager of the Healthy Coliban Catchment program accompanied me and spoke to the students about the unique qualities of the Coliban catchment and strategies the North Central CMA, landholders and other stakeholders are putting in place to care for it.



I led a drama activity with students role-playing the clouds, lakes, rivers, soil, trees and watertable and delivering cups of water to each other's buckets to demonstrate the water cycle processes of evaporation, condensation, precipitation, transpiration and runoff. It was lots of fun, and they did a marvellous job.

I was extremely impressed with their knowledge of the local Coliban River, thanks in part to the monthly water quality testing they undertake but mostly to the wonderful relationship the school has with Malmsbury District Landcare Group who help support their River Detectives journey.

The school has enjoyed playing an integral role in helping to rehabilitate the river over many years with students gaining an invaluable opportunity to make lasting change to a real environmental cause within their

own community – a perfect example of River Detectives schools and Landcare Groups working together.



Term 3 will see us continue rolling out incursions to our 31 River Detectives schools. I look forward to spending time with our enthusiastic teachers and students across the north central region.

Nicole Howie

Waterwatch Project Officer

North Central CMA

Email: nicole.howie@nccma.vic.gov.au

Water Storages Update

Region	Water Storage	% full at 26 May	% full at 24 June
Murray Storages	Dartmouth Dam	63.91	↑65.17
	Hume Dam	44.74	↑51.98
	Third Lake	47.27	↑48.85
	Reedy/Middle Lk	87.74	↑88.46
	Kangaroo Lake	92.46	↓92.12
	Kow Swamp	74.43	↓72.35
	Lake Boga	68.75	68.75
	Lake Charm	86.31	86.31
Loddon Storages	Cairn Curran Res	37.67	↑38.05
	Tullaroop Res	40.06	↓39.10
	Laanecoorie Res	40.14	↓38.13
Bullarook Storages	Newlyn Res	69.58	↑77.67
	Hepburns Lagoon	66.77	↑71.59

Goulburn Storages	Lake Eildon	55.32	↑57.54
	Waranga Basin	37.11	↑54.08
Campaspe	Lake Eppalock	34.78	↑35.43
Coliban Water Storages	Upper Coliban Res	77.20	↑88.40
	Lauriston Res	95.00	↓92.80
	Malmsbury Res	20.70	↑23.6

Source:

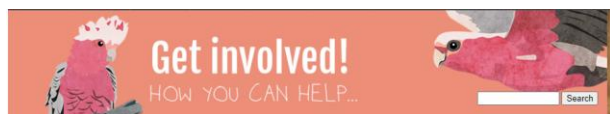
www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/catchments/storage-levels

www.coliban.com.au/about-us/reservoir-levels

Upcoming events and special days

July	
Plastic Free July	July
NAIDOC Week	4-11 July
Schools Tree Day	30 July
World Ranger Day	31 July
August	
National Tree Day	1 August
Landcare week	4-6 August
National Science Week	14-22 Aug
Keep Australia Beautiful Week	16-22 Aug
World Humanitarian Day	19 August
September	
National Biodiversity Month	
National Wattle Day	1 Sept
National Threatened Species Day	7 Sept
Bushcares Major Day Out (TBC)	11 Sept
National Bilby Day	12 Sept
National Organic Week	20-26 Sept
World Rivers Day	26 Sept

Courses & Resources...



Birds in Schools

Article published via Birds in Backyards online May 2021

Birds in Schools, BirdLife Australia's free online education program, is delivering education and conservation action for birds.

The events of 2020 saw Birds in Schools, like many programs, move online. Birds in Backyards launched our e-learning platform, with lessons and materials beautifully redesigned and adapted for the online platform in the last term of the year. While the move to the online space was spurred by COVID19 restrictions, we could not be happier that we can now connect with schools across the country in our program. In fact, students across Victoria, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Western Australia, and Tasmania have all joined us for Birds in Schools. We are hoping to reach the ACT, Queensland and SA in Terms 3 and 4!

Since its online launch, Birds in Schools has engaged hundreds of students in learning about and acting for birds at their schools. The program provides resources and support to guide teachers and students to become citizen scientists and investigate and act on local real-life sustainability challenges. Students have researched local bird species, carried out bird and habitat surveys, and developed and implemented action plans to make their school more bird friendly. Students also connected with live online lessons with Birds in Schools Project Officer Alex Johnson, and entered their bird survey results into Birdata, BirdLife's survey database, so that their data contributes to BirdLife's research and conservation efforts.

In just three school terms, the schools of Birds in Schools have achieved so much! We can't wait to hear more about our Birds in Schools participants' experiences and achievements as they work through the program and their action planning and delivery to make their schools more bird-friendly! If you think Birds in Schools would be a great fit for your school, or you have any questions about the program, we are now taking registrations for Terms 3 and 4 so please get in touch with Alex at alexandra.johnson@birdlife.org.au

Also from Birdlife Australia...

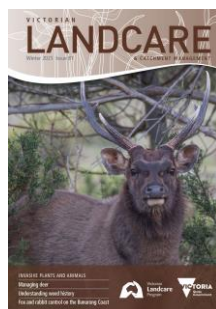


To celebrate the 2021 Yarra Trams Community Partnership Program theme of 'a more sustainable Melbourne', one of Yarra Trams' fleet will be decorated with vivid images of peregrine falcons, sulphur-crested cockatoos, galahs, tawny frogmouths, yellow-tailed black-cockatoos and a laughing kookaburra — all Melbourne favourites — and all in anticipation of the 2021 Aussie Backyard Bird Count.

Keep an eye out for the BirdLife Australia tram and its birds — which can be seen humming along Routes 48 and 109 until September. The BirdLife Australia tram can also be located by searching for 3033 in the tramTRACKER app.

For more information visit the website: 2021 [Aussie Backyard Bird Count](#) (October 18-24)

Winter 2021 issue of the Victorian Landcare magazine published online



The Winter 2021 issue (#81) of the Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management magazine, which is a feature on invasive plants and animals has just been published and is available [online here](#).

Among the stories in this issue of the Landcare magazine include:

- The Victorian Rabbit Action Network and Agriculture Victoria have co-designed a course on leadership in rabbit control to rebuild rabbit knowledge in Victoria.
- Cactus control at Mt Korong – step by step with Mt Korong Eco-Watch.
- Weeds at the Early Stage of Invasion (WESI) Team highlight how understanding weed history helps control future spread.

To access the PDF of issue #81 of the Landcare magazine go [pdf here](#).

Events...



2021 National Landcare Conference

Wednesday 4 to Friday 6 August, 2021
Watch online for free

Due to COVID-19, restrictions, the venue has advised there is a limit to the number of delegates who can attend the 2021 National Landcare Conference in person. Having said that, restrictions in NSW in response to the latest COVID-19 outbreak continue to change, so please keep updated by visiting <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/case-locations-and-alerts.aspx> before you make plans.

You can still get involved in the 2021 National Landcare Conference activities:

- You can purchase a ticket for \$100 to attend the **2021 National Landcare Awards gala dinner** on Thursday 5 August.
- You can purchase a ticket to one of the nine **field trips in the Greater Sydney area**.
- You can register for **FREE to be an online conference delegate** and access the live stream sessions, recorded sessions, posters and abstracts plus connect with other Landcarers and chat online during the conference.

For Online Delegates – Register for Free

You will need to be registered on Landcarer to access the Conference information and resources. For information about the Landcarer digital platform please check out the webpage landcareaustralia.org.au/landcarer-community or you can contact Landcare Australia on hithere@landcarer.com.au.



The Soil CRC webinar program has commenced once again. You can join in the upcoming 45 min webinars including:

- Nigel Wilhelm, PIRSA/SARDI – **Lifting crop production on crushed limestone (calcareous soils)** – Tuesday 20 July 12.00 AEST
- Hanabeth Luke, Southern Cross University – **Future farmers – what drives their decision making?** – Tuesday 3 August 12.00 AEST

You can register for the webinars via the [Soil CRC website](#).

Each presentation will be followed by a Q&A session.



HEAL COUNTRY!
4-11 JULY 2021

The NAIDOC 2021 theme – Heal Country! – calls for all of us to continue to seek greater protections for our lands, our waters, our sacred sites and our cultural heritage from exploitation, desecration, and destruction.

Find out what [NAIDOC Week events](#) are happening across the country and don't forget to share your own!

Funding opportunities...



Recycling Victoria Research and Development Fund – Organics

Sustainability Victoria is supporting businesses and research organisations to research and develop innovative ways to improve processes, performance or systems for recycled organics.

To be eligible, you must be a collaborative partnership of a research organisation and an organisation that produces or uses recycled organics commercially.

One of the project partners must be the Lead Applicant, who applies and is responsible for managing the project. The Lead Applicant must be located in Victoria

Projects must improve process, performance or systems for **existing** recycled organics products.

Closing date: Friday 16 July 2021, 11:59 pm

Total funding available: up to \$300,000

Co-contribution: \$1:\$1

Available to: Businesses, Research institutions

Full grant [program guidelines](#) are available online.



FRRR
Foundation for Rural
Regional Renewal

Tackling Tough Times Together

The Tackling Tough Times Together (TTTT) grant program helps communities access the resources they need to support one another through the ongoing effects of the drought.

Grants are available for a broad range of grassroots, community-led initiatives that directly and clearly benefit local communities. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis and assessed quarterly.

Round 22 now open. Closing date 5pm, 24 August 2021

NOTE: The \$150K tier grants involve a two-stage process. A full application is due by 5pm AEST, Thursday 12 August 2021. Additional information may be requested, which is due by 5pm AEST, Tuesday 24 August 2021.

Full grant guidelines are available here: [Tackling Tough Times Together | FRRR](#)

For queries on this program, you can contact Dea Cavalier

Phone: 1800 170 020

Email: toughtimes@frrr.org.au

Digital Agriculture Investment Scheme



The Digital Agriculture Investment Scheme funded by the Victorian Government is currently open to applications.

Grants from \$5,000 to \$50,000 (ex GST) are available with at least a 50% co-contribution to assist farm businesses invest in eligible on-farm digital technology projects (Eligible Projects) to improve productivity, resilience and the long-term viability of Victorian farms.

The Victorian Government is working to ensure that Victorian farmers are at the forefront of the digital revolution in agriculture. This program follows the launch of the Agriculture Strategy, and Smarter Safer Farms initiative to create a Victorian agriculture sector that is strong, innovative and sustainable.

Grants are available from the date the Scheme opens on 23 June 2021 until program funds are fully allocated or the closing date of 31 October 2021, whichever is sooner.

Please review the full Program Eligibility Criteria and list of Eligible Projects outlined in the [Program Guidelines](#) before you apply.

Only one grant will be offered per farm business (ABN).