

# MEDIA RELEASE



NORTH EAST  
CATCHMENT  
MANAGEMENT  
AUTHORITY

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## **Drought employment scheme helping to protect Region's environmental assets**

Landholders and rural contractors across the North East are helping to protect waterways and important tree planting sites from the ravages of drought.

More than 50 people from the Region have already joined the Victorian Government's Drought Employment Scheme with up to 125 to be employed by the end of February.

The North East Catchment Management Authority is coordinating the roll out of the Scheme across the Region.

CMA Land Stewardship Manager, Mr Chris Reid, said the Scheme is paying people to undertake work that makes good business and environmental sense.

"This drought is not only taking a toll on farming families, their livestock and crops. It's also potentially devastating for our natural environment," said Mr Reid.

"The beauty of the Drought Employment Scheme is that it provides some income for people who are suffering financial hardship and the work they are undertaking will help to prevent environmental damage like soil erosion, the spread of weeds and poor water quality."

People employed under the Scheme can be paid up to \$3,400 for:

- weed control to protect revegetation areas on properties or along waterways;
- emergency watering of revegetation (tree planting) sites;
- fencing to set up stock watering points along waterways; and
- soil conservation work.

In addition, they can recoup up to \$1150 for materials such as chemicals, fuels and oil and fencing materials.

Applicants to the Drought Employment Scheme need to meet eligibility criteria.

"If these are met, we then visit each person and work with them to develop a work program that is suited to their expertise and addresses potential issues in their area of the Catchment," explained Mr Reid.

So far the majority of applications received by the North East CMA have come from beef cattle and dairy enterprises – a trend that reflects the main industry mix in the North East.

The Drought Employment Scheme is operating across Victoria.

People interested in finding out more about the Scheme in the North East can contact the North East Catchment Management Authority on (02) 6043 7600.

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### **Interview/photo opportunities:**

For additional information or to arrange an interview please contact: Mary-Anne Scully, CMA Media & Communications Consultant – **Tel: 0408 685 225**

