



NORTH EAST  
CATCHMENT  
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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### DROUGHT PACKAGE OFFERS NEW INCOME SOURCE FOR NORTH EAST FARMERS

Farmers suffering financial hardship in the North East can now apply for paid work and training available through a Victorian Government Drought Employment Program.

Through the program, the North East CMA will employ up to 100 people across the region to undertake targeted environmental works such as fencing off waterways and paddock trees, establishing off-stream watering sites for stock and soil conservation.

It will also offer training designed to help farmers develop long-term environmental management plans and strategies that can be used to reduce the impact of drought in the future.

North East CMA Land Stewardship Manager, Mr Chris Reid, encouraged people to find out more about the Drought Employment program as it offers short and long-term benefits.

“ There will be some immediate income relief for people who join up as we can pay them for up to 200 hours of their time at \$21.92 per hour,” explained Chris.

The CMA will reimburse participants up to \$1,400 to cover the cost of materials and consumables like fuel, oil, fencing material and piping used in the environmental works. Funds are also available for stock containment areas – up to \$1,500 per SCA.

Work undertaken by farmers through the 2008 Drought Employment program will build on works undertaken through a similar program last year. In 2007 more than 100 drought affected farmers employed by the North East CMA;

- watered almost 10,000 trees;
- erected almost 20 kilometres of fencing along waterways to protect water quality;
- developed some 575 hectares of perennial pastures

“The North East CMA is taking a proactive approach to the impacts of climate change and drought” said Chris.

“As part of the program, people can attend practical training sessions where they can learn how to use environmental planning tools like e-FARMER and MyEMS to improve their business productivity and protect the environment into the future.”

The Drought Employment program will run through until mid June 2008. Applicants need to meet some key eligibility criteria, including;

- Must be in an exceptional circumstances declared area - the region serviced by the North East CMA meets this criteria
- Most income must be derived from a farming enterprise
- Works will be specified in a landholder agreement

Interested farmers can contact the North East CMA for more information and application details. Tel: (02) 6043 7600 or email [necma@necma.vic.gov.au](mailto:necma@necma.vic.gov.au)

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**Additional background:**

The North East CMA worked closely with DSE and DPI to give practical support to landholders during the extreme drought conditions of 2006/2007. The agencies joined forces to offer grants and technical information to help farmers manage drought and climate change in a way that protected their economic and environmental assets.

- 130 landholders from across the North East participated in the Drought Employment program in 2006/2007.
- An additional 101 landholders built stock containment areas.

For additional information or to arrange an interview please contact,

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