

# MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 29 January 2009



NORTH EAST  
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## Drought employment brings some relief to farmers

Farmers across the North East are receiving some welcome financial relief by being paid to undertake work that will help protect the environment.

And more paid work is available.

66 farmers from the region have joined the Victorian Government's \$10 million Drought Employment Programme that is being coordinated by the North East CMA.

Through the programme, the CMA pays people for work like weed control, fencing and soil conservation on public land.

According to Mr Chris Reid from the North East CMA, the Drought Employment Programme is a practical way of helping farmers and the environment.

"The drought is really biting across our the North East. While the CMA can't make it rain, we can offer some relief. We really want to hear from people who derive the majority of their income from agriculture related industries and are suffering hardship as a result of the drought," said Chris.

The North East CMA helps eligible people to develop a work schedule that is suited to their expertise and addresses potential environmental degradation issues in their local area.

It then pays people an hourly rate for their work and can also reimburse people for materials such as chemicals, fuels and oil and fencing materials.

"The ongoing dry is taking a toll on farming families, livestock and crops. It's also potentially devastating for our natural environment," concluded Chris Reid.

"The work people are doing through this programme is helping to prevent soil erosion, weed infestation and reduced water quality in streams and creeks".

In 2006/07 and 2007/08, the North East CMA employed 218 rural people through the Drought Employment Programme, mostly on a part-time basis so that they could also continue with farm or other work

Please telephone (02) 6043 7600 or visit the North East CMA website ([www.necma.vic.gov.au](http://www.necma.vic.gov.au)) for more information about the Drought Employment Programme, including application details.

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For further details, file photos or examples of work being undertaken by farmers in the North East through the Drought Employment Programme, please contact:

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