

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Wednesday, 19 October, 2016

DAIRY GRANTS GIVE FARMERS A WELCOME BOOST

Premier Daniel Andrews today joined dairy farmers in the Echuca area to announce grants to help producers affected by the milk price downturn.

Thanks to funding from the Andrews Labor Government, eligible farm businesses can apply for a grant of up to \$5,000 to invest in fixed infrastructure to improve their farm.

Farmers can use the funding to support operational improvements like irrigation, install better permanent milk vats or fodder storage, undertake pasture renovation, purchase improved sensor technology and upgrade on-farm infrastructure.

Access to the grants is not limited to Murray Goulburn and Fonterra suppliers given the challenging seasonal and economic conditions impacting all dairy farmers.

The \$1.8 million grants program is part of the Labor Government's comprehensive \$13.5 million Dairy Assistance Package.

The development grants will remain open until 30 June 2017, or until the program funds are fully allocated.

The Labor Government is supporting dairy farmers through targeted assistance including:

- \$1.4 million for dairy farming families to receive 15 hours of free kindergarten
- \$1.5 million for camps, sports and excursions so no child misses out
- \$750,000 for *Rural Skills Connect* employment program for farmers
- \$600,000 for targeted dairy technical support
- \$320,000 to extend Rural Financial Counselling services to small businesses
- Support for retraining through the TAFE system.

Rural Finance will deliver the grants program and farm business can check the eligibility criteria by contacting Rural Finance on 1800 260 425 or by visiting www.ruralfinance.com.au/Industry-programs.

To access the grants, applicants will need to have an ABN, be registered for GST and derive at least 50 per cent of their primary income from farming.

A minimum dollar for dollar co-contribution from the farm business is required to receive the program's support.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"We were elected to put people first and that's exactly what we're doing with our dairy farmers during these tough times."

"Whether it's grants to support farm businesses, retraining opportunities through TAFE or free kinder, we'll give dairy families the support they need to get them back on their feet."