



Australian Government

# Your guide to **Drought Force**



**Drought Force**

AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

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## **What is Drought Force?**

Drought Force helps individual farms and farm communities that have been severely affected by drought. Drought Force aims to help farming properties with their workforce needs and to help keep the pool of farm labour from moving away from the region.

Drought Force is part of the Work for the Dole programme.

## **Where does Drought Force operate?**

Drought Force operates in areas declared as Exceptional Circumstances (EC), as well as other areas eligible for Australian Government drought assistance. It primarily takes place on private land, usually local, drought affected farms. Taking part in Drought Force does not mean putting other workers out of a job.

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## What can Drought Force do?

Drought Force is designed to:

- ease the burden of drought for farmers and their families, and
- make sure that farms and properties are maintained and therefore able to cope once a drought breaks.

Drought Force will also:

- encourage people to remain in their local community, retaining and building local skills
- support the local economy to deal with the impact of drought, and
- support the local community.

## How do I take part?

You can take part if you:

- can offer farm work in a drought declared area, or
- you are unemployed, for example due to the effects of drought, you are eligible for income support, or live in a drought affected area and would like to work on a farm.

For more information contact your local Community Work Coordinator (CWC), phone the Drought Force Hotline on **1800 004 226** or visit the Work for the Dole web page at **[workplace.gov.au](http://workplace.gov.au)**.

## How long will I help?

Participation is voluntary, usually for two days each week, but participants can contribute for as many days a week as they like.

Special arrangements apply for people receiving income support who choose to work on the farm for 30 hours or more each week. These people will not have to look for work.

## Who can help on Drought Force?

Drought Force is open to volunteers and unemployed people living in drought affected areas, especially those who have lost their job due to drought. People already participating in Work for the Dole can also get involved in Drought Force. People who live in an affected area and lose their job as

a result of drought can volunteer to participate straight away.

Drought Force will help the community by supporting those most in need as a result of the devastating effects of drought. Drought Force can also provide participants with training and new skills, helping unemployed people find work when the drought breaks and jobs become more readily available.

### What will I get if I participate?

You will receive a Training Credit worth \$800 to spend on accredited training when you start on Drought Force. You may also be eligible for additional Training Credits of \$800 when you complete Drought Force. These credits can be used to update existing skills or gain new skills. You can use them while you are in Drought Force or for up to 12 months after the credits are awarded.

### What activities are offered?

People involved in Drought Force work on private farms in activities such as:

- maintaining irrigation channels
- hand feeding and watering stock, and
- upgrading of community facilities.

### Job Network—helping people in drought-affected areas

The Australian Government has made changes to Job Network services to make it easier for job seekers to get help. These changes include:

- immediate access to Job Search Support services for eligible job seekers made redundant or facing redundancy due to drought, and
- immediate access to Intensive Support (job search training) for job seekers residing in all eligible areas who have been laid off as a result of a drought.

**For more information about Job Network phone 13 62 68 or visit [jobnetwork.gov.au](http://jobnetwork.gov.au).**



### Finding a job—[jobsearch.gov.au](http://jobsearch.gov.au)

Australia's largest free online job board is [jobsearch.gov.au](http://jobsearch.gov.au), with more than 70 000 jobs displayed daily. Whether you are looking for a job, a career change or a volunteering opportunity then JobSearch can help.

You can browse for jobs, create and build a résumé—no matter how you use JobSearch it's free.



## Your right to privacy

Personal information is protected under the *Privacy Act 1988* and may not be disclosed unless it is authorised to do so.

If you are receiving income support, your information is authorised to be disclosed under *Social Security (Administration) Act 1999*.

In providing employment services to you, your information may be shared between those contracted service providers who are assisting you, the Department of Employment and

Workplace Relations (DEWR), Centrelink and other Australian Government departments and agencies.

The sharing of your information is important as it enables Australian Government departments and agencies to provide you with the most appropriate services to meet your needs.

For more information about your privacy ask your service provider or DEWR, or visit **[privacy.gov.au](http://privacy.gov.au)**.

## Your guarantee of service

You will receive services from your CWC for your Drought Force activity. These services will take into consideration your circumstances, background, needs and skills.

During your Activity Agreement interview, you can expect your CWC to:

- tell you about your rights and responsibilities
- give you information about how to access Training Credits and the Passport to Employment
- quickly place you in a Drought Force activity, that where possible suits your preferences and skills
- provide interpreter services for your interview if you need them.

When you participate in a Drought Force activity you will receive:

- help and quality supervision
- where possible, the opportunity to develop and apply your skills
- the opportunity to interact with others
- a safe working environment
- equipment you need to participate in your activity, including protective clothing
- answers to questions about your placement
- help to find a course to use your Training Credit, when eligible
- help to assess the skills you have learned during your placement, and help to get references.

If you are not satisfied with the service you have received, you should raise this first with your CWC. If you are still not satisfied, then you should call the Customer Service Line on **1800 805 260**. A Customer Service Officer will endeavour to resolve your concerns quickly and fairly.

## Further Assistance

- National Relay Service  
1800 555 677  
[www.relayservice.com.au](http://www.relayservice.com.au)
- Translating and Interpreting Service  
13 14 50  
[www.immi.gov.au/tis](http://www.immi.gov.au/tis)