

Introduction

New South Wales is the second-largest wine-producing state in Australia, accounting for 30 percent of the \$5 billion Australian wine industry.

The bushfires of 2019-20 saw grape growers in key wine industry regions in NSW such as the Hunter, Tumbarumba and Shoalhaven Coast experience direct property damage, with other key regions also being impacted from the extended exposure to smoke, which has caused taint in the grapes and has rendered much of the 2020 vintage unsuitable for commercially released wine.

NSW Wine Industry Association estimates the cost in NSW to be in excess of \$100 million when also accounting for the downturn in wine tourism. The impact of the fires comes on top of the drought, which had already reduced grape yields significantly.

This package will provide co-contributions to viticulturalists in NSW who have been impacted by the bushfires from 31 August 2019 to assist in the recovery of their farms and vineyards.

The eligible activities and costs have been determined through the development of the Agriculture Recovery Plan available on the Bushfire Industry Recovery Package website.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligible Applicants

Viticulture businesses that:

- have an ABN; and
- were directly impacted by bushfires or can demonstrate smoke taint since August 2019.

Given the unique impacts of the fire season on viticultural businesses, eligible applicants will be able to apply for one of the below forms of support:

Repair and Replanting Grant: businesses which had vineyards in active production which were directly damaged by fire.

Recovery Grant (non-disaster declared areas): businesses must be in a Local Government Areas (LGAs) not declared under the natural disaster provisions (Orange, Cabonne, Yass and Hilltops). A smoke taint test, or similar evidence will be required to demonstrate impact, and proof of a decline in revenue of 40% or more in a 3-month period, compared to the same period in the previous year, as a result of the bushfire.

Eligible Projects

Repair and Replanting Grant: Projects to re-establish and repair vineyards directly damaged by bushfires including site clean-up, repair or replacement of netting, trellises and irrigation, technical advice and replanting.

Bushfire Support Grant (non-disaster declared areas): The grant may be used for, but is not limited to meeting standard business costs, including utilities, salaries and rent, seeking financial advice to support the recovery of the business, adjusting the business to be viable in the changed local context following the bushfires, developing the business and extending business reach through marketing and communications activities, or improvements to make the business more resilient to future disasters.

Eligible Costs

Repair and Replanting Grant: Capital and other costs directly related to the re-establishment and repair of damaged vineyards. These will be assessed by the Rural Assistance Authority (RAA) as reasonable costs and services to re-establish a damaged vineyard.

Costs already claimed under the Rural Assistance Authority Special Disaster Grant – Bushfires, other State or Commonwealth grants or insurance will not be eligible.

Recovery Grant (non-disaster declared areas): Capital and other costs directly related to the delivery of the eligible projects.

Eligible Amounts and Limits

Repair and Replanting Grants: Grants are available up to \$20,000 dollars per burnt hectare, to be matched by an equal cash or in-kind contribution from the business.

Recovery Grants (non-disaster declared areas): Maximum \$10,000 per business.

Co-contribution

Repair and Replanting Grants: Co-contributions can include direct cash and in-kind contributions to the project. Costs already incurred by businesses for the re-establishment and repair of damaged vineyards (and not already claimed / paid under another State or Commonwealth program or insurance) can be deemed a co-contribution.

Recovery Grants (non-disaster declared areas): Not applicable.

Application Process

All applications will be completed online. The form is available at www.nsw.gov.au/bushfire-industry-recovery-package.

Repair and Replanting Grant:

Applicants will be required to provide the following information:

- Business details including location, ABN and evidence of active production.
- Evidence of damage and impact from the bushfires
- Costings for activities proposed to be funded by the grant
- Demonstration of matching co-contribution from the applicant

In undertaking assessment, the NSW Rural Assistance Authority may request additional information to form a determination.

Recovery Grant (non-disaster declared areas):

Applicants will be required to provide the following information:

- Business details including location and ABN
- Evidence of decline in revenue of 40% or more in a 3-month period, compared to the same period in the previous year (profit and loss statements, Business Activity Statements (BAS), annual reports)
- Evidence of Full Time Employees and turnover during various periods before and after the bushfires, such as payroll reports (small business is a business that is not a public company,

charitable business or body corporate and employees fewer than the equivalent of 20 full-time employees)

- Evidence of smoke taint impact on harvest, such as smoke taint test results

The NSW Rural Assistance Authority will assess your application against the eligibility criteria and may request additional information from you or your nominated financial advisor or accountant. The RAA has the right to refuse an application if you cannot demonstrate that you meet the eligibility criteria. The RAA can also refuse an application if you do not provide the information requested, in order to undertake an assessment.

Getting Support

Support can be accessed from the Rural Assistance Authority at www.raa.nsw.gov.au, rural.assist@raa.nsw.gov.au and 1300 678 593.

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