

# UPSKILL AND INVEST

## YoungFarmers Scholarship

Program Guidelines  
2018



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# Upskill and Invest – Young Farmers Scholarship Program

## Program overview

In recognition of the increasing need for sophisticated skills in the next generation of farmers, the Victorian Government has established a scholarship program tailored to the professional needs of young farmers.

The Upskill and Invest – Young Farmers Scholarship Program (the Program) provides young farmers and those who work directly on farm with up to \$5,000 (exclusive of GST) towards training or study (Upskill), backed by further funds of up to \$5,000 (exclusive of GST) to invest on-farm or in professional development (Invest), putting new skills into practice.

The Upskill funds can be used to meet the cost of study at a university, a registered training organisation, or another quality training provider approved through the application process.

Completion of study or training unlocks the Invest funds to invest in activities that support application of learnings from the chosen study or training. This may include professional development, farm planning or other on-farm activities.

Guidance on the types of study, training and Invest activities that may be supported are provided in **Attachment A**.

The Program also provides ongoing opportunities for long-term networking and support through the Young Farmers Scholarship Alumni.

One round of scholarships will operate per year. The application period opens in February for approximately 8 weeks.

The Program is managed by the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (the Department).

## Eligibility

Applicants must:

1. be aged 35 years or under at the time of the application close date
2. be working in a food and fibre farm business in Victoria at least three days per week for the past three months
3. have at least two years of total experience on-farm
4. be an Australian citizen or permanent resident currently residing in Victoria.

## Selection criteria

Applicants must address the following selection criteria through the online application process:

- demonstrated interest in building skills and boosting your food and fibre agricultural career prospects
- desire to implement learnings from study or training
- commitment to build a productive and profitable agricultural career in food and fibre in Victoria.

Applicants must also provide:

- a clear, detailed study plan and timeline
- a case outlining how the knowledge and skills obtained through selected study or training will benefit your career
- a proposal outlining how the Invest funds will be used and how the investment will support the application of learnings from the chosen study or training
- a case outlining how the scholarship will help build the productivity and profitability of the farm business and your agricultural career in food and fibre in Victoria.

## Application, assessment, and delivery process

### Stage 1 – Application process

Applicants can contact the Department for guidance on developing their application.

- All applicants are required to read and accept the Program Guidelines before submitting an application. By submitting an application, applicants are deemed to have accepted the Program Guidelines and agreed to be bound by them. Applicants are required to provide evidence of:
  - Australian citizenship or permanent residency (including change of name if relevant)
  - current residency in Victoria
  - current on-farm employment or farm ownership
  - a total of at least two years farm experience.

Applicants must submit an application form online at: [www.business.vic.gov.au/support-for-your-business/grants-and-assistance/young-farmers-scholarship-program](http://www.business.vic.gov.au/support-for-your-business/grants-and-assistance/young-farmers-scholarship-program)

Receipt of applications will be confirmed via email.

### Stage 2 – Shortlisting process

The Scholarship Selection Committee (the Committee) assesses all applications and shortlists suitable applicants for interview.

Those who are not shortlisted will be notified by email. Unsuccessful applicants will have the opportunity to re-apply in future rounds.

The decision of the Committee as to which applicants will be interviewed will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.

### Stage 3 – Interview process

Shortlisted applicants may be invited to an interview with the Committee (either in person or by phone). Successful applicants will be offered a scholarship.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their interview by email or phone.

The decision of the Committee as to which applicants will receive a scholarship will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.

#### Stage 4 – Release of Upskill funds to undertake study or training

Scholarship recipients have up to two years (from the time they are awarded the scholarship) to complete their agreed Upskill activities. Funds will be provided to reimburse the tuition expenses paid by the scholarship recipient.

Individuals who receive the scholarship in their capacity as a farm business (registered for GST) must:

- sign a formal Letter of Agreement with the Department
- provide evidence of acceptance and enrolment at their chosen institution(s) (for example, a letter from the institution)
- provide an invoice for tuition fees from the training provider and evidence of payment (for example, receipt, Commonwealth Assistance Notice or Fee Account Statement)
- provide an Australian Business Number (ABN) on a tax invoice to the value of the tuition fees charged by the training provider (excluding GST - see the **Goods and Services Tax** section for further information).

Individuals who receive the grant in their capacity as an individual (i.e. not a business, no ABN) OR as a farm business not registered for GST must:

- sign a formal Letter of Agreement with the Department
- provide evidence of acceptance and enrolment at their chosen institution(s) (for example, a letter from the institution)
- provide an invoice for tuition fees from the training provider and evidence of payment (for example, receipt, Commonwealth Assistance Notice or Fee Account Statement)
- provide a completed Statement by a Supplier form (see the **Goods and Services Tax** section for further information).

When scholarship recipients have fulfilled these requirements, they will receive a payment via electronic funds transfer to a nominated bank account. Payment may take up to four weeks to process.

#### Stage 5 – Release of the Invest component of scholarship funds

Funds of up to \$5,000 (exclusive of GST) will be provided as reimbursement for the purchase/cost of investment made by the scholarship recipient.

Before Invest funds can be released, all Upskill activities must be completed. Scholarship recipients will be required to provide:

- proof of completion of the Upskill activities
- proof of purchase/cost of investment of the Invest activities (for example, receipt).

When scholarship recipients have fulfilled these requirements, they will receive a payment via electronic funds transfer to a nominated bank account. Payment may take up to four weeks to process.

The Invest funds must be expended within six months of completion of study or training, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Department.

If, following completion of their studies, scholarship recipients want to revise their Invest proposal, they must submit a revised proposal to the Young Farmer Coordinator for consideration within 30 days of completing study or training. The value of the revised proposal should not exceed the value of the Invest proposal approved through the application process. Approval from the Department via email is required before the revised Invest proposal is implemented. The Department reserves the right to reject a revised Invest proposal.

### **Stage 6 – Initiation to the Young Farmers Scholarship Alumni**

Scholarship recipients become part of the Young Farmers Scholarship Alumni Network.

Scholarship recipients will be asked to regularly update an alumni profile detailing their experience with the Program. They will also be asked to participate in evaluation surveys and promotional activities and events associated with the program and other Victorian Government Young Farmer initiatives, including the Young Farmers Ministerial Advisory Council.

### **Assessment of applications**

Applications will be assessed against the **eligibility** and **selection criteria** set out in the program guidelines.

The Young Farmers Scholarship recipients will also represent the diversity of Victoria's agricultural industry (sector, gender, geographical location, professional experience and personal background).

#### **Selection Committee**

Members of the Committee are appointed by the Department.

#### **Complaints process**

Complaints, enquiries and feedback in relation to the processing of applications should be sent to **Youngfarmer.Coordinator@ecodev.vic.gov.au**.

If an applicant, or any other person, continues to be dissatisfied with the administration of the Program they may raise their concerns with the Victorian Ombudsman.

The Victorian Ombudsman may be contacted by telephone on 03 9613 6222, or email at **ombudsman@ombudsman.vic.gov.au**.

## Goods and Services Tax (GST)

The Department will reimburse the agreed upon out-of-pocket expenses of the recipient. Whether the Department reimburses the GST paid by the scholarship recipient to the supplier depends on the GST status of the scholarship recipient. Scholarship recipients can choose to receive the scholarship in their capacity as an individual (i.e. no ABN, not a business), a business not registered for GST, or a business registered for GST.

- **If you are an individual and do not have an ABN**

This means that you are not registered for GST. You will be reimbursed the total amount paid by you to the supplier (including the GST applied by the supplier).

To claim payment, you will need to complete and submit a 'Statement by a Supplier' form.

A Statement of Supplier Form is available from the **Young Farmer Coordinator** or from the Australian Taxation Office website [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au)

Scholarship recipients must tick the box that states: *The supply is made by an individual or partnership without reasonable expectation of profit or gain*

- **If you have an ABN but are not registered for GST**

You will be reimbursed the total amount paid by you to the supplier (including the GST applied by the supplier).

To claim payment, you will need to provide your ABN on an invoice to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, and specify on the invoice that you are not registered for GST.

- **If you have an ABN and are registered for GST**

You will be reimbursed the amount paid by you to the supplier, excluding the GST applied by the supplier. As you are receiving the scholarship in your capacity as a GST-registered business, you can recoup the GST paid by you from the Australian Taxation Office through your business activity statement (BAS).

To claim payment, you will need to provide your ABN on a tax invoice to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources. The invoice should indicate that no GST has been applied.

The Department recommends that applicants seek independent financial advice on GST and any other tax implications.

### **Responsibility of scholarship recipients**

Scholarship recipients are expected to manage all aspects of their scholarship independently (this includes study arrangements and Invest activities) and must notify the Department in writing of any changes to their contact details.

### **Special considerations**

If you are experiencing financial hardship or there are special circumstances which may impact your ability to accept this scholarship as per the Program Guidelines, please contact the Department.

### **Review and amendments**

The Department in its absolute discretion may review and amend the Upskill and Invest - Young Farmers Scholarship Program Guidelines.

### **Contact**

Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources

Tel: 136 186

Email: [Youngfarmer.Coordinator@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:Youngfarmer.Coordinator@ecodev.vic.gov.au)





# Attachment A

## Guidance on selecting study or training

Applications will be considered for any form of study or training, including professional short courses or workshops, as long as it:

- involves a minimum of 16 contact hours (*this may involve more than one course or workshop, and may be across multiple institutions or organisations, or offered online*)

### AND

- is delivered by a registered training organisation (RTO)

### OR

- is delivered by any other reputable organisation approved through discussion with the Department. For further information, contact the Young Farmer Coordinator.

Fields of study must support the applicant to build a productive and profitable career in agriculture. Study or training in the areas of business planning and management, risk management and financial literacy are strongly encouraged.

The **Victorian Skills Gateway** and **training.gov.au** provide information on vocational training and Learn Local organisations. Further information is also available from local industry or training organisations or local Victorian Farmers Federation branches.

Examples of the types of training that may be eligible can be found at: [www.vic.gov.au/youngfarmers](http://www.vic.gov.au/youngfarmers)

For further information, contact the Young Farmer Coordinator.

The duration of study for which the scholarship applies should not be more than two years, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Department.

When completing the application form, applicants will be asked to provide a clear study plan and timeline. To do this, applicants will need to confirm their:

- education institution/training organisation name
- course name and code (if applicable)
- course commencement date
- total course duration (units/hours)
- cost of tuition.

Scholarships will be awarded based on the information provided in applications. Therefore, it is important that applicants take adequate steps to ensure that the cost and timing of the proposed study plan is accurate.

Study or training already commenced or completed at the time of applying for the scholarship will not be eligible for reimbursement. However, longer duration courses and

training with distinct components (e.g. individual subjects) not yet undertaken at the time of applying may be eligible for reimbursement. Examples include, future semesters of an Agribusiness Diploma or the second or subsequent year of a related degree. Individual subjects not yet commenced at the time of application, that are part of a longer program of study (e.g. Diploma or Degree), may be considered by the Selection Committee. In these circumstances the subjects must be completed before the Invest activities commence.

## Victorian Training Guarantee

The Victorian Training Guarantee (VTG) is available to individuals who do not hold a post-school qualification or who want to gain a higher level qualification than they already hold.

Individuals that are successful in obtaining a scholarship and who are eligible for the Victorian Training Guarantee, or any other form of government funding, in association with the training approved through the application process, will be provided with funds that cover any course fees charged by the training provider. Recipients will be required to provide a copy of the invoice of fees from the training provider and a copy of the receipt for payment.

## Guidance on expenditure of the Invest funds

Invest funds must be directed towards activities that will support the application of learnings from the chosen study or training and must be expended within six months of completion of study or training, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Department.

Invest activities must not be undertaken before the Upskill activities are completed. If an Invest activity is undertaken before the Upskill activities are completed, the Department may seek reimbursement of the scholarship funds.

Applicants will need to demonstrate, in their application, a clear link between the skills acquired through the Upskill activity and the application of those skills in the Invest activity.

Examples of how this might work in practice can be found at: [www.vic.gov.au/youngfarmers](http://www.vic.gov.au/youngfarmers)

For further information, contact the Young Farmer Coordinator.

Activities that **will not** be considered include, but are not limited to:

- works that have been paid for from other sources for the same or similar project
- activities that are required by law or that replace an individual's, group's or government's legal responsibility for sustainable management of resources under their control, unless able to demonstrate specific value to the project. For example, training to gain a licence required by law to undertake an activity is not eligible (such as dairy licencing fee, driver's licence)
- works, activities, or purchases already undertaken prior to submitting your application for the scholarship
- purchase, lease or acquisition of land or vehicles
- purchase of permanent or temporary water rights
- purchase, leasing or maintenance and repair of transportation vehicles such as boats, cars, quad bikes, motorbikes, trailers and trucks
- purchase of livestock
- drainage works, unless identified as part of an integrated local catchment plan or with technical input
- administration, legal or insurance costs
- day-to-day operating costs of the business, for example, rent, power, cleaning, telephones
- standard variable inputs, for example seed, fertiliser, chemical, fodder
- standard boundary and house fencing that would fall within a landholder's normal responsibility
- preparation of tax returns
- pre-existing annual fees and services.



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