



FarmReady Reimbursement Grants

Program Guidelines

January 2009

For further information:

Telephone:
1800 087 670

Fax:
02 6125 5875

Post:

The FarmReady Program Administrator
ANU Enterprise Pty Ltd
The Fulton Muir Building (95)
The Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200

Program information, guidelines and related forms are available at
www.farmready.gov.au

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Overview | 3 |
| Purpose of program..... | 4 |
| Objective | 4 |
| How is it to be delivered?..... | 4 |
| Role of the Program Administrator..... | 4 |
| Information for Training Participants | 5 |
| Who is eligible? | 5 |
| What courses are available?..... | 5 |
| <i>Key Learning Areas</i> | 5 |
| What's not funded? | 6 |
| What can I claim? | 6 |
| <i>Course Costs</i> | 6 |
| <i>Associated Reasonable Costs</i> | 7 |
| How do I apply?..... | 7 |
| What are the conditions? | 8 |
| Which courses are available?..... | 8 |
| Appeals process | 8 |
| Information for Training Providers..... | 9 |
| Training Provider Registration | 9 |
| Assessment of Courses..... | 9 |
| Trainer Qualifications | 10 |
| How to Register your Training Organisation and Course..... | 11 |
| Glossary..... | 12 |

FarmReady Reimbursement Grants

Overview

Primary production, like many industries, is a knowledge-based industry increasingly reliant on the knowledge, innovation, skills and attitudes of its workforce. For many primary producers, the capacity to gain and apply relevant knowledge is complicated by factors including difficulties in accessing formal courses in post secondary and tertiary institutions and the diversity of knowledge levels between producers. In recent years short term training courses with a focus on business management have tried to fill this gap.

Australia's Farming Future is the Australian Government's flagship four-year initiative (until June 2012) to improve productivity and help farmers manage climate change.

The initiative comprises a number of elements:

- The Climate Change Research Program will provide funding for research projects and on-farm demonstration activities.
- FarmReady will help industry and primary producers develop skills and strategies to help them deal with the impacts of climate change.
- Climate Change Adjustment Program assists farmers in financial difficulty to manage the impacts of climate change.
- Transitional income support is linked to the climate change adaptation program and provides short-term income support and advice and training opportunities to farmers in serious financial difficulty, while they adapt their farm to changing circumstances, including climate change.
- Community networks and capacity building activities will focus on increasing the leadership and representative capacity of specific target groups including women, youth, Indigenous Australians and people from culturally linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Within the Australia's Farming Future framework, the FarmReady program provides \$26.5 million over four years to improve adoption of risk management and business management skills, increase adoption of new technologies and best practice management to enable primary producers and industries to adapt and respond to the impacts of climate change.

The program consists of two separate elements:

- FarmReady Reimbursement Grants to individual primary producers and Indigenous land managers to attend approved climate change training activities, and
- FarmReady Industry Grants to industry organisations, farming groups and natural resource management groups to undertake projects that will enable their members to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

This guide provides details of the FarmReady Reimbursement Grants for individual primary producers, commercial fishers, foresters and Indigenous land managers to attend approved training activities. The Reimbursement Grants are administered by a program administrator contracted by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Separate guidelines are available for FarmReady Industry Grants.

Purpose of program

The FarmReady Reimbursement Grants component focuses on:

- improving the capacity of eligible participants to adapt to the impacts of climate change through targeted risk management and business management training activities, and
- enabling participants to reappraise their business prospects and options in light of changing climate conditions and make appropriate on-farm operational decisions, including the potential to capture commercial opportunities.

Objective

FarmReady aims to improve the capacity of primary producers to increase their self reliance and preparedness to adapt to climate change through participation in targeted training activities.

How is it to be delivered?

FarmReady Reimbursement Grants are administered by a program administrator contracted by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Reimbursement grants are available to all individuals who participate in approved training courses and are deemed eligible for support under these guidelines. Training providers need to apply to have their courses approved, and meet the conditions of approval in order for their courses to be listed under the program.

Key date: The FarmReady program runs until 30 June 2012. To allow for administrative processes at the end of the program, reimbursement will not be available for courses completed after 31 May 2012.

Role of the Program Administrator

Applications for course approval and participant reimbursement are assessed by the program administrator contracted by the Department.

The assessment process is documented by the program administrator and carried out in accordance with the requirements outlined in these guidelines.

Information for Training Participants

Who is eligible?

Eligible individual participants include primary producers and Indigenous land managers. For the purposes of the program:

- **Primary producers** are defined as those who are:
 - owner/operators of a primary production enterprise (farming, fishing and forestry), as determined by the Australian Taxation Office¹; or
 - management positions² of a primary production enterprise (farming, fishing and forestry), as determined by the Australian Taxation Office¹; or
 - the immediate family of the owner/operator of a primary production enterprise (farming, fishing and forestry), as determined by the Australian Taxation Office¹.
- **Indigenous land managers** are defined as those involved in the management decisions for Indigenous lands that are zoned for rural purposes, or outside existing control plan areas, if the land is owned, managed, controlled or operated by:
 - an Indigenous community, corporation or trust; or
 - an Aborigine or Torres Strait Islander.

Reimbursement grants are not available to employees of Commonwealth, State and local government departments and agencies involved in primary production, fishing and forestry.

What courses are available?

Key Learning Areas

FarmReady focuses on the following key learning areas:

- i) understanding the implications of climate variability and climate change
- ii) integration of new techniques, including high-level technical skills, for sustainable production as a result of climate change
- iii) natural resource planning and adaptive management such as planning for sustainable use, integrated catchment management, drought management, fire management, and flood management as a result of climate change.
- iv) farm business management, risk assessment and identification of management options
- v) development of research and analytical skills to be applied in primary production enterprise
- vi) strategic planning and thinking, scenario planning, decision making
- vii) holistic "whole farm" planning
- viii) financial management, such as budget preparation, monitoring and reporting, and ability to understand financial statements
- ix) human resource management / management of people

Key learning areas will be reviewed periodically to ensure that the program is meeting its objectives.

¹ The enterprise must have an Australian Business Number (ABN) and the applicant must provide a declaration of the primary production tax status of the enterprise.

² 'management positions' include, but not limited to, assistant managers, human resource/personnel managers, office managers, head stockmen and farm overseers.

What's not funded?

Funding is not available for:

- i) ongoing secondary and tertiary education
- ii) one-on-one provision of training
- iii) stand alone technical/operational training activities unless linked to whole of farm climate change strategy
- iv) single issue production management courses unless linked to whole of farm climate change strategy
- v) specific training activities required to be undertaken to satisfy government regulatory and statutory obligations
- vi) training activities that are cross-subsidised by other government programs or agencies which would provide the opportunity of “double-dipping” government funding
- vii) overseas training activities including conferences, study tours, and workshops
- viii) domestic conferences, study tours, workshops and other similar activities that do not provide structured and interactive learning activities with clearly defined learning outcomes
- ix) purchase of materials, including software, not part of the course cost. Approved e-learning and correspondence learning can be supported if both the developer and deliverer meet training provider requirements
- x) refresher or similar courses unless it incorporates additional information and research, and
- xi) courses not approved under the targeted training prior to training taking place
- xii) preparation of business plans for farm businesses or new enterprises
- xiii) courses completed after 31 May 2012.

What can I claim?

Course Costs

A reimbursement grant of up to \$1500 is available per financial year. The reimbursement grant covers the training course costs for participation in approved training courses. Additionally, reimbursement of associated reasonable costs (see below) in attending approved training will be covered under the FarmReady program, and can be claimed separately from the \$1500 reimbursement grant.

A participant can seek reimbursement for more than one course per financial year, but the reimbursement grant provided will not exceed \$1500 in that year. Where eligible costs incurred for a course are greater than \$1500 the participant will not be reimbursed for the full cost of attending the course.

Participants must submit invoices and proof of payment (receipts) for all items.

The program administrator will have discretion to remove the barriers of participation for Indigenous land managers.

Associated Reasonable Costs

Associated reasonable costs cover travel, accommodation, meals and child care. The amount that can be reimbursed for associated costs will be capped to a maximum of \$500 per financial year. Participants must submit invoices and proof of payment (receipts) for all items.

Grant payments for associated reasonable costs will not be counted as part of the \$1500 available per financial year.

Associated reasonable costs that can be reimbursed under the program are:

- Travel by car, at the Australian Tax Office rate per kilometre per vehicle (see <http://www.ato.gov.au/individuals/content.asp?doc=/Content/33874.htm>) on condition:
 - (i) the distance from home to the training venue is more than 150 km one way;
- Air travel economy seat “best fare of the day”.
- Bus or train travel, a full reimbursement of the cost of an economy seat.
- Accommodation where:
 - (i) participants need to attend training that is more than 150 km distance one way from their home and commences before 9.00 am / ceases after 5.00pm;
or
 - (ii) participants need to attend a specific live-in course.
- Meals capped at a total cost of \$100 per day per person.
- Child care, to a maximum amount of \$50 per child per day (for up to 2 children) and \$25 for each additional child upon provision of an itemised receipt (proof of payment) for child care provided, including the name of the carer, number of children, date and hours, rate, and total cost. Claimants who are also receiving government assistance for child care may need to seek advice on how reimbursement under this clause may affect their entitlements.

Generally, amounts received by way of grants or subsidies will either be assessable as income under ordinary concepts or as a capital receipt. There may be also be GST implications involved in receipt of the FarmReady Reimbursement Grant. Applicants are advised to seek advice from a tax professional.

How do I apply?

An application form to attend an approved course must be completed for each participant and submitted to the program administrator prior to commencing the course.

The program administrator will confirm pre-approval prior to commencement of the course.

Pre-approval must be granted for each participant prior to attendance at each course.

What are the conditions?

The following documents must be submitted to the program administrator for each participant wishing to claim the reimbursement grant within 30 days of completing the course:

- A completed Participant Claim for Payment form
- A completed Course Review Form (to be completed by the Participant at the completion of the course)
- Tax invoices and receipts for each cost to be claimed:
 - detailing evidence of course payment, course attendance and completion, courses name, location, training date(s) and time and participant contact details;
 - for child care provided;
 - for travel, accommodation and meal claims.

Where the cost of the approved course is paid by the participant's employer or business, reimbursement for the course cost may be claimed by the employer/business on the participant's behalf. Receipts must show that payment for the course has been made by the person to whom the reimbursement is to be paid.

In circumstances where a training activity extends over a number of months, by arrangement with the program administrator consideration may be given to quarterly progress payments subject to satisfactory completion of training modules and confirmation of participant attendance.

Participants may be asked to participate in follow-up activities following completion of the course. This could include participation in follow up surveys and case studies. Statistical information from the application forms, course review forms and surveys will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the FarmReady program.

Which courses are available?

A list of approved courses will be available on the FarmReady website. FarmReady Reimbursement Grants are not available for attendance at courses that have not been approved.

Appeals process

Applicants wishing to appeal a decision should contact the program administrator in the first instance. Following initial review of the decision the program administrator, if the applicant is not satisfied, appeal can be made to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Information for Training Providers

Training Provider Registration

Registration will be sought from training providers to establish an approved list of courses available through providers in the private and public sectors. All training providers, trainers and training courses are required to be registered under the program.

Training providers wishing to register with the program must complete an registration form and:

- provide course information and materials for the course(s) (if applicable) to be registered with the program (training providers cannot be registered with the program unless they have at least one course registered)
- provide adequate information about trainer qualifications for each of the courses to be delivered under the program
- ensure that changes to any details contained in the required forms occurring subsequent to approval are notified to the program administrator as soon as practicable.
- ensure that the conditions of approval for courses registered under their name are met, and continue to be met, for the duration of the time that the course is registered with the program

Training Providers receive payment for course delivery costs from participants, but will not be eligible to receive additional funding under the program.

Assessment of Courses

Courses will be assessed by the program administrator. For courses to be approved, training providers must be able to demonstrate that their course:

- (i) meets the objectives of the program
- (ii) falls within one of the identified key learning categories
- (iii) is focused at management level³ with the exception of the following categories:
 - understanding the science of climate change
 - integration of new techniques / industries for sustainable production
- (iv) takes an integrated or systems approach to improving the sustainable productive capacity of the enterprise. (Such approaches typically consider the interaction between multiple aspects of the production system and provide producers with the skill to identify options and implement best practice for adapting the system to respond to climate change)
- (v) is run by an approved training provider
- (vi) is delivered by a qualified trainer
- (vii) is cost effective, taking into consideration access and equity issues, and meets prevailing market price benchmarks, and
- (viii) contains accurate and up-to-date information.

³ “Management level” training is described under the program with reference to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) used in the Vocational and Technical Education sector. Under this framework, management level is considered to be at AQF Level IV or above.

| | |
|--------------|--|
| . TAADEL401A | Plan and Organise Group Based Delivery |
| . TAADEL402A | Facilitate Group Based Delivery |
| . TAAASS401A | Plan and Organise Assessment |
| . TAAASS402A | Assess Competence, |

or

(iii) possess other appropriate teaching qualifications or current relevant experience in delivery of adult training and education as determined by the program administrator.

Training courses delivered under the program must be delivered by trainers that have been approved by the program administrator⁵.

Copies of Certificate IV qualifications must be provided. Where trainers are delivering courses through an RTO, details of current delivery arrangements together with a copy of the written agreement is required. If an organisation is delivering courses through an RTO, their competencies must be within the RTO scope of registration.

How to Register your Training Organisation and Course

Courses and training providers involved in the FarmReady program must be approved.

A completed Training Provider and Course Registration form must be submitted to the program administrator with the first course to be registered by each Training Provider at least 30 days prior to the delivery of the course.

A Course Approval Form must be submitted to the program administrator for each course to be registered with the program at least 30 days prior to the delivery of the course.

The Training Provider and Course Registration Forms can be found at www.daff.gov.au/farmingfuture.

Details of trainer qualifications must be submitted to the program administrator along with the Course Approval Form for all trainers who will be delivering the course.

⁵ Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) delivering accredited training under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and issuing a Statement of Attainment to participants are not subject to this requirement.

Glossary

Applicant - the “applicant” means the participant or participant’s employer or business (where the participant’s employer or business has paid for the course on behalf of the participant).

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) - is a unified system of national qualifications covering qualifications issued by secondary schools, vocational education and training providers (TAFEs and private providers) and the higher education institutions (mainly universities). The framework is a quality assured national system of educational recognition. See Appendix A.

Australian Qualifications Training Framework (AQTF) - is the set of nationally agreed quality assurance arrangements for training and assessment services delivered by training organisations. It comprises standards for Registered Training Organisations and for State and Territory Registering/Course Accrediting Bodies.

Eligible Cost - means the net activity cost of training to the participants eligible for reimbursement (as determined by the program administrator). These costs include the direct operational costs e.g. professional fees, training resource materials, venue and equipment hire, administration/promotion and catering.

(Eligible cost **excludes** such items as computer software, aerial photographs, audits, text books and professional advice.)

Management Level training - means training that is targeted at improving decision making, planning and risk management skills, including the identification and evaluation of relevant information and management options. These types of generic competencies are typically described under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) as being at Certificate Level IV and above.

Participant – means a person who meets the eligibility criteria as described in these guidelines and receives the reimbursement grant for undertaking an approved training course.

Primary Production Enterprise - means:

- a rural enterprise carried on within the agricultural, horticultural, pastoral, aquacultural, or apicultural industries; or
- a wild catch fishing enterprise;
- private commercial forestry enterprise or
- a wild game harvesting enterprise.

The Program Administrator – is contracted by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the individual reimbursement grant element of the targeted training program.

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) – refers to a training provider delivering accredited training under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

Training Event – a single course delivered a single time.

Training Occasion – each eligible FarmReady participant at a single training event. For example: 10 FarmReady participants at 1 training event equals 10 training occasions and 10 FarmReady participants at 2 training events equals 20 training occasions.

Training Provider - means the organisation responsible for the provision of training courses and for ensuring that the conditions of approval for courses under the program are met, and continue to be met, for the duration of the time that the course is registered with the program.

Differentiation of AQF levels

The table indicates what an individual with a particular qualification is able to do.

| Certificate 1 | Certificate 11 | Certificate 111 | Certificate IV | Diploma |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| Demonstrate knowledge by recall in a narrow range of options | Demonstrate basic operational knowledge in a moderate range of areas | Demonstrate some relevant theoretical knowledge | Demonstrate understanding of a broad knowledge base incorporating some theoretical concepts | Demonstrate understanding of a broad knowledge base incorporating theoretical concepts with substantial depth in some areas |
| Demonstrate basic practical skills such as the use of relevant tools | Apply a defined range of skills | Apply a range of well developed skills | | |
| | Apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems | Apply known solutions to a variety of predictable problems | Apply solutions to a defined range of problems | Analyse and plan approaches to technical problems or management requirements |
| Perform a sequence of routine tasks given clear directions | Perform a range of tasks where choice between a limited range of options is required | Perform processes that require a range of well-developed skills where some discretion and judgement are required | Identify and apply skill and knowledge areas to a wide variety of contexts with depth in some areas | Transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or creative skills to a range of situations |
| Receive and pass on messages/information | Assess and record information from varied sources | Interpret available information, using discretion and judgement | Identify, analyse and evaluate information from a variety of sources | Evaluate information, using it to forecast for planning or research purposes |
| | Take limited responsibility for own outputs in work and learning | Take responsibility for own outputs in work and learning | Take responsibility for own outputs in relation to specified quality standards | Take responsibility for own outputs in relation to broad quality and quantity parameters |
| | | Take limited responsibility for the outputs of others | Take limited responsibility for the quantity and quality of the output of others | Take some responsibility for the achievement of group outcomes |

Source: *Australian Qualifications Framework Implementation Handbook*, Third Edition, 2002, Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board, Carlton, p.10