

# CENTRAL QUEENSLAND DROUGHT ASSISTANCE BRIEF - November 2019



This brief is provided as a guide for key contacts and currently available assistance programs and support services for dairy regions severely affected by current drought conditions in the Central Qld region.

Existing assistance measures are mainly focussed around existing drought declarations in Qld shires. For the latest drought declaration map and declaration dates please visit <https://www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au/drought/drought-declarations/>

The dairy industry has initiated an initial industry response. Updates will be provided to advise of additional activities to assist dairy farmers managing the effects of the current dry conditions.

With support from Dairy Australia, Subtropical Dairy has engaged the services of Graham Chambers (0407 572 178) to contact farmers in the affected regions and signpost them to support services available. Please contact Belinda Haddow (Regional Extension Coordinator, Subtropical Dairy - 0423 00 3638) should you have any urgent enquiries.

## **Bushfire/Disaster Support**

For up-to-date information on the Eastern Qld Bushfires – 8 November 2019 and assistance available for affected businesses and communities, please visit <https://www.disasterassist.gov.au/Pages/disasters/current-disasters/Queensland/eastern-qld-bushfires-8-12-november-2019.aspx>

## **Taking Stock one-on-one consultations**

Given the current seasonal conditions, all dairy farmers in Queensland and northern NSW can now access free one-on-one advice from experienced advisers through Dairy Australia's Taking Stock program. The sessions take place on farm and are private, confidential and personalised to address your individual situation and help you map out a plan ahead. Taking Stock aims to address the specific needs of farmers, including any physical, financial and people issues that are identified.

Sessions could include:

- Feed options, planning and budgeting
- Diet formulation and herd nutrition analysis
- Cash budgeting
- Meeting the bank
- Managing a fodder shortage
- Herd decisions and animal health
- Managing your farm team during tough times

Benefits of the program include a fully funded three to four hour consultation on your farm with an experienced consultant, an action plan tailored to your farm with your next steps identified, a follow up Taking Stock consultation to review and update your action plan and the opportunity to assess your current situation, discuss your options and work out your key decisions.

If you would like to arrange a consultation, then please call your local extension co-ordinator or Brad Granzin on 0431 197 479 or [brad@subtropicaldairy.com.au](mailto:brad@subtropicaldairy.com.au) .

The next section of this brief presents a summary of available assistance to date.

### **New FarmHub website**

<https://farmhub.org.au/>

FarmHub connects Australian farmers with services and support during tough times, such as drought. You can access support by State or Category or visit their Knowledge Centre for more information.

### **Queensland Government – Drought Relief Assistance Scheme - 13 25 23 -**

<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/rural-disaster-recovery/drought/assistance/dras-subsidies>

Producers with a property that is currently drought declared may be eligible for:

- freight subsidies for transporting fodder
- freight subsidies for transporting water
- the Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate (EWIR), which provides a rebate on the purchase and installation of water infrastructure installed for emergency animal welfare needs.

Producers with a property that has had its drought declaration revoked may be eligible for:

- freight subsidies for transporting livestock returning from agistment
- freight subsidies for transporting livestock purchased for restocking.
- Road distance claimable for freight subsidy has been increased from 1,000 km to 2,000 km
- Subsidies payable for freight has changed to the lesser of 50% of the freight charge, or 20c /km/tonne (previously 13 cents/km/tonne)
- A property that has been in six consecutive years of drought {declared in year 2013/2014 or before, as of 1/7/18, with a drought management plan (DMP ) now has a yearly limit of \$50,000 for freight subsidy & Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate ( EWIR )}.
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### **Drought Relief from Electricity Charges Scheme (DRECS) – 13 25 23**

<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/rural-disaster-recovery/drought/assistance/dreecs>

The Drought Relief from Electricity Charges Scheme (DRECS) provides relief from supply charges on electricity accounts that are used to pump water for farm or irrigation purposes. Financial assistance is available in drought-declared areas or if your property has been drought-declared. You can apply for a waiver or reimbursement of supply charges on all relevant electricity accounts. If you are an **Ergon Energy customer** seeking relief from electricity supply charges, contact 13 10 46.

Assistance is available: re annual fixed charges i.e., metering services (those meters that have a separate National Metering Identifier), the farm is drought declared & has completed the drought declaration form on the Ergon web site, [www.ergon.com.au](http://www.ergon.com.au) , service fees & minimum payments.

If you are experiencing financial difficulty as a result of the drought, you can defer payments on electricity accounts that are used for farming purposes. The option to defer will continue until the drought declaration has been revoked. When that happens, repayment terms will be arranged on a case-by-case basis.

**Non-Ergon customers** apply through the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy – 13 43 87

Complete the online application form or contact us to request a hard copy of the form, Email: [droughtrelief@dnrme.qld.gov.au](mailto:droughtrelief@dnrme.qld.gov.au) or Phone: 13 43 87

### **Other drought rebates and fee relief – 13 25 23**

<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/rural-disaster-recovery/drought/assistance/other-relief>

Land rent rebates – 13 43 87

Water license waivers – 13 43 87

Transport-related drought assistance measures – 13 23 80. Transport-related drought assistance measures include:

- permits for increasing the maximum hay loading height
- concessions on shifting droughted livestock
- waivers and greater flexibility on certain vehicle registration conditions and fees and charges
- increased school transport allowances for some families that drive their children to school or connect with a school bus run.

Administered by the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Queensland Police Service.

### **Drought Loans – Regional Investment Corporation - 1800 875 675** <https://www.ric.gov.au>

Drought Loans are available to help farm businesses recover from, and prepare for, future droughts, and to return to viability in the long term. These loans are funded by the Australian Government and delivered by the Regional Investment Corporation.

### **Farm Household Allowance – 13 23 16**

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/farm-household-allowance>

The Farm Household Allowance provides money for basic living expenses to eligible farm families experiencing hardship. You do not have to be in a drought-declared area to be eligible to apply for the Farm Household Allowance.

The allowance is administered by the Australian Government's Department of Human Services. Learn more about how to claim the Farm Household Allowance, 13 23 16 ( HELP LINE ). Applications can be made online or through the local Rural Financial Counselling Service in their region.

Payments are income-based. The benefit runs for four years.

As well, an activity supplement of \$3000 per person can be received to be used for improving farm financial viability e.g. have an agronomist visit / succession planning training / obtaining a HV Drivers licence PLUS a further \$1000 per person in the 4<sup>th</sup> year may be paid out. Processing time is approximately 21 days.

### **Australian Tax Office: 1800 806 218 – Drought Help**

<https://www.ato.gov.au/general/financial-difficulties-and-serious-hardship/in-detail/help-for-drought-affected-taxpayers/>

Help is available for drought-affected taxpayers across regional, rural and metropolitan areas to manage their tax; more time to pay, waiving penalties or interest charged at a time you were affected by drought, payment plans with interest free periods, adjusting pay as you go (PAYG) instalments to better suit your circumstances, tax incentives for primary producers.

Remember to lodge all activity statements and tax returns by the due date even if you can't pay.

## Financial and emotional support services

*Drought places financial & emotional stress on affected communities. If you or someone you know is experiencing financial stress or mental health & wellbeing issues, support is available from professional financial counselors and/or mental health services.*

### Rural Financial Counsellors

The Rural Financial Counselling Service provides free financial advice to producers who are suffering financial hardship and have no alternative sources of impartial financial information. The service is funded by grants from government to local organizations that employ financial counsellors.

Location	Phone/Fax	Email/Post
<b>Head Office</b>	Phone: 07 4622 5500 Fax: 07 4622 3699	Email: <a href="mailto:executiveoff@rfcssq.org.au">executiveoff@rfcssq.org.au</a> Website: <a href="http://www.rfcssq.org.au">www.rfcssq.org.au</a>  PO Box 433 Roma QLD 4455
<b>Biggenden</b>	Kim Corfield Mobile: 0427 296 848	Email: <a href="mailto:kim.corfield@rfcssq.org.au">kim.corfield@rfcssq.org.au</a>
<b>Bundaberg</b>	Kath Clarke Mobile: 0439 067 944	Email: <a href="mailto:kath.clarke@rfcssq.org.au">kath.clarke@rfcssq.org.au</a>
<b>Innisfail</b>	Nick Birchley Mobile: 0448 460 309	Email: <a href="mailto:nick@rfcsnq.com.au">nick@rfcsnq.com.au</a>
<b>Mackay</b>	Richard Lewis Mobile: 0499 144 522	Email: <a href="mailto:richardlewis@rfcsnq.com.au">richardlewis@rfcsnq.com.au</a>
<b>Townsville</b>	Ian Durham Mobile: 0466 089 959	Email: <a href="mailto:ian@rfcsnq.com.au">ian@rfcsnq.com.au</a>
<b>Rockhampton</b>	Sally Ottaway Mobile: 0427 803 706  John Lacey Mobile: 0429 894 474	Email: <a href="mailto:sally.ottaway@rfcssq.org.au">sally.ottaway@rfcssq.org.au</a>  Email: <a href="mailto:john.lacey@rfcssq.org.au">john.lacey@rfcssq.org.au</a>

### Other support services

SALVOS – 13 72 58 – Drought Assistance Line – 02 8757 8080

- South Burnett Region Corps – 07 4162 5246
- Atherton – 07 4091 1410
- Rockhampton – 07 4923 5600
- Gladstone – 07 4972 6878
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- Rockhampton – 07 4923 5600
- Gladstone – 07 4972 6878

AUSSIE HELPERS – FOODBANK – 07 3395 8422 ( Head Office, any enquiries )

- Cairns – Anglicare North Qld – Theresa Roberts – 0436 608 697
- Mackay – Anglicare Mackay/Whitsunday – John Langford – 07 4953 3444
- Rockhampton – Hands of Compassion – Lisa Holmes – 0413 000 028

FRONTIER SERVICES ( Pastors ) – 1300 787 247

ST VINCENT DE PAUL – 07 30 10 1000

- Cairns – 07 4033 8301 & 07 4033 8333
- Rockhampton – 07 4927 8073
- Support Centre Kingaroy – 0741 625 721

DROUGHT ANGELS – Chinchilla – [droughtangels@gmail.com](mailto:droughtangels@gmail.com)

LIONS NEED FOR FEED – 0459 444 111 – [Lionsneedforfeed@yahoo.com.au](mailto:Lionsneedforfeed@yahoo.com.au) – [www.needforfeed.org](http://www.needforfeed.org)

LIFELINE – 13 11 14

RED CROSS – 1800 733 276

Buy a Bale – 1300 327 624 – 07 3054 5979 – 0412 448 333

QCWA – 07 3026 1220 – [www.qcwa.org.au](http://www.qcwa.org.au) – Email: [SECRETARY@QCWA.ORG.AU](mailto:SECRETARY@QCWA.ORG.AU)

Care Outreach – 07 5471 7636

BURRUMBUTTOCK HAY RUNNERS – Brendan Farrell – 0439 322 605 – [Belinda@hayrunners.com](mailto:Belinda@hayrunners.com)