

Environmental Protection (Efficiency and Streamlining) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

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Submission By: Queensland Farmers' Federation
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Health, Environment and Innovation Committee
Committee Secretariat
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

QUEENSLAND
FARMERS'
FEDERATION

PO Box 12009 George Street, Brisbane Qld 4003
Level 8, 183 North Quay, Brisbane Qld 4000
qfarmers@qff.org.au | (07) 3837 4720
ABN 44 055 764 488

Via website: www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Work-of-Committees
HEIC@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Minister

Re: QFF Submission - Inquiry into the Environmental Protection (Efficiency and Streamlining) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

The Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the Queensland Parliament Health, Environment and Innovation Committee as a part of its review of the *Environmental Protection (Efficiency and Streamlining) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025*, particularly the proposed amendment to extend the statutory reporting timeframe for Underground Water Impact Reports (UWIR's) from three to five years.

QFF supports several key provisions in the Bill that strengthen transparency and improve protections for water users. These provisions include:

- Annual UWIR updates which provide regular insight into groundwater conditions and ensure emerging trends are visible through ongoing monitoring,
- Consolidation of baseline assessment obligations for cumulative management areas enabling the Office of Groundwater Impact Assessment (QGIA) to prepare comprehensive baseline assessments for all water bores, on & off tenure; and
- A formalised process for landholder-initiated bore assessments that is inclusive of clearer review and appeal rights where landholders believe their bore performance has been impacted by resource activities.

These measures represent meaningful improvements to the management and accountability framework. However, QFF has a clear and substantive objection to the proposal to expand the UWIR reporting cycle from three to five years.

While annual updates will continue to provide monitoring data, the statutory mechanisms that recalibrate impact zones, update management settings, adjust monitoring obligations and activates make-good arrangements can only occur through a full UWIR revision.

Extending this interval materially weakens the responsiveness of the underground water management framework at a time when extractive activity and cumulative groundwater pressures are increasing. The longer reporting period significantly delays the point at which emerging or unexpected aquifer responses can be translated into enforceable regulatory action, thereby reducing the timeliness and effectiveness of protections for bore owners and agricultural water users.

For the purpose of clarity, the area of greatest concern covered by a UWIR, is the area that overlays the Condamine Alluvium, one of Queensland's richest agricultural areas.

While activities by the tenure holder have long been planned, at the time of writing there has been no active CSG extraction east of the Condamine River.

Development across this highly sensitive area is proposed in the medium-term future and extending the UWIR reporting cycle now would be counterproductive.

Many land holders across this area hold significant concerns, and UWIR reporting will be critical in identify any unforeseen impacts or alternatively providing positive assurance that CSG extraction is not causing harm to this critical water supply or the land above it.

Given the significance of these proposed amendments for agricultural production, rural communities, and long-term groundwater security, QFF respectfully requests the opportunity to appear before the Committee to present further evidence and respond to any questions.

We thank the committee members for their consideration of this submission and welcome ongoing engagement with the committee throughout the consideration of the bill.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jo Sheppard', written in a cursive style.

Jo Sheppard
Chief Executive Officer