

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2023 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to Biosecurity Queensland's operations, will the Minister outline the breakdown of the state government's funding for general biosecurity projects and programs:

- a) animal measures and plant based measures (reported separately 2020-23),
- b) cattle tick monitoring and enforcement measures (reported separately 2020-23);
- c) fire ant monitoring, eradication and enforcement measures (reported separately 2020-23)?

ANSWER:

All figures provided are Queensland Government funding only.

- a) animal measures and plant based measures (reported separately 2020-23)

Animal and plant measures as delivered through Biosecurity Queensland's Animal Biosecurity and Welfare, Plant Biosecurity and Product Integrity and Invasive Plants and Animal business areas. The figures do not include corporate overheads or the National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program which is outlined in section 'c' below.

Business/Work area	State government revenue			
	2019-20 \$'000	2020-21 \$'000	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$000
Animal Biosecurity	12,612	16,229	14,045	16,881
Animal Welfare	4,579	4,538	4,699	5,523
Plant Biosecurity & Product Integrity	13,601	13,129	11,557	15,156
Invasive Plants and Animals	14,284	12,884	13,832	16,143
Total	45,076	46,780	44,133	53,703

- b) cattle tick monitoring and enforcement measures (reported separately 2020-23)

Business area	State government revenue			
	2019-20 \$'000	2020-21 \$'000	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000
Cattle tick monitoring and enforcement	943	655	676	550

c) fire ant monitoring, eradication and enforcement measures (reported separately 2020-23)

Business/Work area	State government revenue			
	2019-20 \$'000	2020-21 \$'000	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000
Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program	14,148	16,135	1	0
Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce	0	0	127	2,718
Total	14,148	16,135	128	2,718

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 2

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to the Service Delivery Statements (SDS) page 9 relating to DAF's capital program for 2022-23 – Will the Minister provide a list of approved projects including:

- the budget and scope of each project for 2021-22 and 2022-23 reported separately and
- the scheduled date of completion (reported in table format)?

ANSWER:

The DAF capital program is focused on developing and upgrading research facilities, existing infrastructure, and land improvements to support service delivery outcomes for the agriculture, biosecurity, fisheries, and forestry sectors.

The first table below reflects the published capital program budget for 2021-22 that includes both capital purchases and capital grants.

DAF 2021-22 CAPITAL PROGRAM			
CAPITAL PURCHASES IN 2021-22			
Capital Project Name	Scope	2021-2022 Budget \$'000	Scheduled Date of Completion
Assets formerly held by Qld Agricultural Training Colleges (QATC)	Develop a new Central Qld Smart Cropping Centre at Emerald.	4,650	30/06/2024
Computer equipment	Purchase of computer infrastructure equipment such as servers and routers.	4,290	Ongoing
Other property, plant and equipment	Upgrade of fencing structures and purchase of livestock.	2,372	Ongoing
Scientific equipment	Purchase of scientific equipment such as microscopes, autoclaves, centrifuges, ultra-low temperature freezers.	2,242	Ongoing
Heavy plant and equipment	Purchase of agricultural machinery such as tractors, irrigators and all- terrain vehicles.	2,031	Ongoing

Research facilities development	Upgrades and replacement of infrastructure such as laboratories and glasshouses at research facilities.	1,957	Ongoing
Minor works	Upgrades and replacement of infrastructure such as sheds and sewerage systems at operational facilities.	1,356	Ongoing
Smart Farms Initiative	New glasshouse and infrastructure at Gatton.	1,200	30/06/2023
Upgrade and refurbishment of existing facilities at Toowoomba	Continue the upgrade and refurbishment of existing facilities to enhance service delivery while complying with new building and safety standards.	954	30/06/2022
Vessels and marine equipment	Upgrades and replacement of patrol vessels, trailers and marine safety equipment.	816	Ongoing
Upgrade of Mareeba research facility	Upgrade of laboratories at the Mareeba research facility.	790	30/06/2022
Mid-life refit of the patrol vessel "KI Ross"	Refit and refurbishment of the patrol vessel known as the "KI Ross".	418	30/06/2022
Ecosciences and Health and Food Various Sciences Precincts fit-out	Replace and upgrade fit-out equipment such as cold-rooms and shade-sails.	325	Ongoing
Software purchases and development	Development of digital software information systems.	300	Ongoing
TOTAL CAPITAL PURCHASES FOR 2021-22		\$23,701	
CAPITAL GRANTS IN 2021-22			
Capital Grant Name	Scope	2021-22 Budget \$000	Scheduled Date of Completion
Assets formerly held by Qld Agricultural Training Colleges (QATC)	Contribution to the Longreach Regional Council to establish a regional training facility.	1,000	30/06/2023
Young Animal Protection Society (YAPS)	Contribution towards the upgrade of adoption facilities in Cairns.	500	30/06/2023
TOTAL CAPITAL GRANTS FOR 2021-22		\$1,500	
TOTAL CAPITAL PURCHASES AND GRANTS FOR 2021-22		\$25,201	

The table below reflects the published capital program budget for 2022-2023 that includes both capital purchases and capital grants.

DAF 2022-23 CAPITAL PROGRAM			
CAPITAL PURCHASES IN 2022-23			
Capital Project Name	Scope	2022-23 Budget \$'000	Scheduled Date of Completion
Computer Equipment	Enhancements of Information Technology Network services.	3,187	Ongoing
Assets formerly held by Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges	Finalise long-term decisions on the future of assets formerly held by the QATC, including a new Central Queensland Smart Cropping Centre at Emerald.	2,700	30/06/2025
Heavy Plant and Equipment	Purchase of agricultural machinery such as tractors, irrigators and all-terrain vehicles.	2,586	Ongoing
Upgrade to Mareeba Research Facility	Continue the upgrade of fruit handling laboratories enabling scientists to provide research services to the expanding and new horticultural industries at Mareeba.	2,520	30/06/2023
Research Facilities Development	Upgrades and replacement of infrastructure such as laboratories and glasshouses at research facilities.	1,796	Ongoing
Scientific Equipment	Purchase of scientific equipment such as microscopes, autoclaves, centrifuges, ultra-low temperature freezers.	1,762	Ongoing
Wild Dog Barrier Fence	Enhancements to Wild Dog Barrier Fence and office equipment.	1,400	Ongoing
Minor Works	Upgrades and replacement of infrastructure such as sheds and sewerage systems at operational facilities.	1,327	Ongoing
Gatton Smart Farm	Upgrade infrastructure and equipment to support horticulture productivity and profitability.	1,200	30/06/2024
Fit-out of Ecosciences and Health and Food Sciences Precincts	Replace and upgrade fit-out equipment such as cold-rooms and shade-sails.	953	Ongoing
Other Property, Plant and Equipment	Purchase of livestock and enhancement of office equipment.	673	Ongoing
Longreach Office Upgrade	Upgrades to aged air conditioning at the Longreach office.	600	30/06/2023
Vessels and Marine Equipment	Continue to replace vessels and marine equipment for fisheries research and regulatory functions.	552	Ongoing
Maroochy Research Facility Spillway Upgrade	Design and project management of new dam spillway at Maroochy Research Facility.	300	30/06/2023
Gatton Research Facility Fire Hydrant Upgrade	Upgrade to aged fire hydrant system at Gatton Research Facility.	270	30/06/2023

Tor Street Toowoomba Complex Fire Hydrant Upgrade	Upgrade to aged fire hydrant system at Tor Street complex.	150	30/06/2023
TOTAL CAPITAL PURCHASES FOR 2022-23		21,976	
CAPITAL GRANTS IN 2022-23			
Capital Grant Name	Scope	2022-23 Budget \$'000	Scheduled Date of Completion
Assets formerly held by Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges	Finalise long-term decisions on the future of assets formerly held by the Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges.	4,000	30/06/2023
Young Animal Protection Society Upgrade	Contribution towards the upgrade of adoption facilities in Cairns.	1,000	30/06/2023
Queensland Country Women's Association Building Restoration and Renovation	To continue minor works upgrades to infrastructure, including community halls.	500	30/06/2024
TOTAL CAPITAL GRANTS FOR 2022-23		5,500	
TOTAL CAPITAL PURCHASES AND GRANTS FOR		27,476	

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No. 3

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to SDS page 9 and staffing service areas – Will the Minister provide a breakdown of staff numbers specifically broken down by location base, into the following categories reported separately for 2022-23:

- i. agriculture;
- ii. biosecurity;
- iii. fishing;
- iv. forestries;
- v. Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) and
- vi. the number of graduate roles, what the roles are, and if they are aligned with a particular service area?

ANSWER:

As of 30 June 2023, the active FTE was 2101.39. The ability to respond to changing circumstances is fundamental to the department achieving its purpose. To this end, multi-disciplinary teams that work across disciplines and with other agencies, including industry, are critical so that adequate capability and capacity exists to support Queensland's thriving agricultural sector.

REGIONAL BREAKUP	i. Agriculture	ii. Biosecurity	iii. Fisheries	iv. Forestry	TOTAL
Brisbane CBD	93.83	110.43	84.3	33.05	321.61
Central	83.03	23.25	18	16.11	140.39
North	151.33	75.22	49.55	9	285.1
South	488.59	333.07	81.75	49.6	953.01
Corporate Allocation	89.41	61.47	24.39	11	186.27
Total	906.19	603.44	257.99	118.76	1 886.39

Above numbers is exclusive of 215 FTE servicing other departments

QRIDA

Location Breakup	Temporary	Permanent	FTE
Brisbane	21.2	84.98	106.18
Bundaberg		1	1
Cloncurry		1	1
Emerald		1	1
Innisfail		1	1
Kingaroy		2	2
Mackay		1	1
Rockhampton		1	1
Roma		1.6	1.6
Toowoomba	3	8	88
Townsville	1		1
Regional Other*	19.46	12	31.46
Total	44.66	114.58	159.24

As at 30 June 2023, QRIDA's actual full-time equivalent (FTE) was 159.24 FTE against a 2022-23 budget of 149 FTE, with some 33% of its workforce regionally-based to best service the rural and regional communities. QRIDA uses a flexible staffing model for processing applications for financial assistance and temporary staff are engaged and fluctuate in alignment with the incoming volumes of applications. Engaging temporary staff ensures QRIDA's processing times for financial assistance applications deliver these much-needed funds to Queenslanders as quickly as possible.

Graduates

As of 30 June 2023, the number of DAF graduate roles was 23.

- 18 graduates as part of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) graduate connect program
- One graduate as part of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) Policy Futures Program.
- Four graduates as part of the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) Queensland Government Digital Graduate Program.

The Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) has joined the department's graduate connect program with two additional graduate roles. The total number of DAF graduate program roles across QRIDA and DAF is 25.

ALL GRADUATE ROLES						
LOCATION BREAKUP	i. AGRICULTURE	ii. BIOSECURITY	CORPORATE	iii. FISHERIES	v. QRIDA	Total
Biloela	1					1
Brisbane City	4	1	6		2	13
Charleville	1					1
Dutton Park	2					2
Emerald	1					1
Nambour				1		1
Rockhampton	2					2
South Johnstone	1					1
Toowoomba	2					2
Townsville	1					1
TOTAL	15	1	6	1	2	25

Note that Forestry currently does not have any graduate roles.

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No. 4

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to SDS page 4, Biosecurity Queensland and fire ant detection and treatment – Will the Minister outline (reported separately by year from 2020 – 2023 and Local Government area) the:

- number of reports of fire ant detection,
- number of sightings,
- number of treatments, and
- treatment methods used by DAF officers?

ANSWER:

Number of reports of fire ants – **noting that not all reports are confirmed as fire ants**

Number of reports of fire ants – by Financial Year and LGA				
LGA	2019 – 20	2020 – 21	2021 – 22	2022 – 23
Ballarat City	1	0	0	0
Ballina Shire Council	0	0	0	1
Balonne Shire	0	1	0	0
Banana Shire	3	1	0	4
Bathurst Regional Council	0	1	0	0
Blacktown City Council	0	0	0	1
Boroondara City	0	0	1	0
Brisbane City	2208	3479	3555	3056
Bundaberg Regional	13	11	17	15
Burdekin Shire	5	0	0	2
Cairns Regional	6	8	4	23
Camden Council	0	0	1	0
Casey City	1	1	0	0
Cassowary Coast Regional	0	1	2	2
Central Coast Council	0	0	0	1
Central Highlands Regional	0	1	2	5
Charters Towers Regional	1	2	2	0
City of Mandurah	1	0	0	0
City of Onkaparinga	0	1	0	0

City of Parramatta Council	0	0	0	1
City of Perth	0	0	0	1
City of Stirling	0	1	0	0
Clarence Valley Council	1	0	1	0
Cloncurry Shire	0	1	0	1
Coffs Harbour City Council	0	0	0	2
Cook Shire	0	0	0	2
Coomalie Shire	0	0	0	1
Darwin Municipality	0	0	1	1
Douglas Shire	1	0	0	1
Dubbo Regional Council	0	0	0	1
Flinders Shire	0	0	0	2
Fraser Coast Regional	17	18	26	18
Gladstone Regional	14	18	14	13
Gold Coast City	1011	1604	2229	1877
Goondiwindi Regional	0	1	5	2
Gympie Regional	11	11	21	12
Hinchinbrook Shire	0	1	0	0
Hume City	0	0	1	0
Inverell Shire Council	0	0	1	1
Ipswich City	2209	3673	4689	3085
Isaac Regional	4	1	0	1
Ku-Ring-Gai Council	0	0	0	1
Kyogle Council	0	1	0	0
Lismore City Council	0	1	2	1
Livingstone Shire	1	5	0	7
Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire	0	0	0	1
Lockyer Valley Regional	133	86	140	183
Logan City	4145	7022	8699	6663
Longreach Regional	1	1	1	0
Mackay Regional	6	4	2	3
Maranoa Regional	2	1	0	3
Mareeba Shire	1	1	0	2
Mid-Coast Council	0	0	0	1
Monash City	0	0	0	1
Moreton Bay Regional	184	395	402	587
Mosman Municipal Council	0	0	0	1
Mount Isa City	2	1	0	2
Murweh Shire	1	1	0	0
Newcastle City Council	0	1	0	0
Noosa Shire	13	21	13	15
North Burnett Regional	2	1	6	2
North Sydney Council	0	0	0	1
Northern Beaches Council	0	0	0	1

Paroo Shire	0	0	1	0
Penrith City Council	0	0	0	1
Port Macquarie-Hastings Council	0	1	1	0
Port Phillip City	0	1	2	0
Port Stephens Council	0	2	0	1
Randwick City Council	0	0	0	1
Redland City	197	335	298	465
Richmond Shire	1	0	1	0
Rockhampton Regional	5	10	5	7
Ryde City Council	0	0	0	3
Scenic Rim Regional	192	322	404	344
Shire of Kalamunda	0	0	2	0
Somerset Regional	55	66	71	75
South Burnett Regional	2	7	5	8
Southern Downs Regional	5	12	11	13
Sunshine Coast Regional	76	99	63	85
Sutherland Shire Council	0	0	0	1
Tablelands Regional	2	1	1	5
The Council of the Shire of Hornsby	0	0	0	1
The Hills Shire Council	0	0	0	1
The Rural City of Murray Bridge	0	0	1	0
Toowoomba Regional	40	45	37	60
Townsville City	15	16	5	11
Tweed Shire Council	3	2	0	1
Wagga Wagga City Council	0	0	1	0
Waverley Council	0	0	1	0
Western Downs Regional	5	0	5	8
Whitehorse City	0	1	0	0
Whitsunday Regional	7	5	0	5
Wollongong City Council	0	0	1	1
Wyndham City	1	0	0	0
Yarra Ranges Shire	0	0	0	1
Blank*	1	5	1141	559
Grand Total	10605	17308	21894	17264

*Public reports where the location details were not provided.

Number of sightings (where detections have been confirmed as RIFA. This includes Public Reports and Program identified sites)

Number of reports of fire ant sightings – by Financial Year and LGA				
LGA	2019 – 20	2020 – 21	2021 – 22	2022 – 23
Brisbane City	1622	1895	1951	2045
Gold Coast City	498	773	866	1071
Ipswich City	2063	2728	3302	2707
Lockyer Valley Regional	11	8	33	152
Logan City	4052	4705	5424	4829
Moreton Bay Regional	0	6	4	7
Redland City	118	139	140	296
Scenic Rim Regional	130	244	387	455
Somerset Regional	11	20	11	17
Toowoomba Regional	0	0	0	3
Grand Total	8505	10518	12118	11582

Number of treatments – Total number of sites treated including public reports and planned treatment

Number of sites treated for fire ants – by Financial Year and LGA				
LGA	2019 – 20	2020 – 21	2021 – 22	2022 – 23
Brisbane City	5063	6769	6013	4563
Gold Coast City	8097	4977	41763	4025
Ipswich City	16955	42581	33739	30896
Lockyer Valley Regional	37802	1680	4151	15207
Logan City	19456	15462	15034	11272
Moreton Bay Regional	0	32	841	1341
Redland City	245	376	338	1483
Scenic Rim Regional	18360	9936	23418	35045
Somerset Regional	5641	16275	11130	9836
Southern Downs Regional	0	2	1	0
Toowoomba Regional	0	0	0	926
Grand Total	111619	98090	136428	114594

Treatment methods used by the Program include:

Aerial bait application by helicopter

Ground bait application by utility terrain vehicle

Ground application of bait by staff using manual hand spreader

Ground application of bait using blower truck

Direct Nest Injection (DNI) of liquid pesticide

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 5

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to SDS page 5 in relation to the Forestry Industry Development and the Native Timber Advisory Panel, could the Minister outline:

- how many times the board has met in the 2022-23 financial year?
- what recommendations have been made from the meetings?
- the status of such recommendations being implemented?

ANSWER:

- The Native Timber Advisory Panel (the Panel) was established in 2021 as an early commitment of the Government's Native Timber Action Plan.
- The Panel has met on a total of eight occasions:
 - seven times between June 2021 and June 2022; and
 - once during the 2022-23 financial year.
- In October 2022, the Panel Chair provided a report to Minister Furner, which contains the Panel's views on the following matters:
 - the draft revised *Managing a native forest practice accepted development vegetation clearing code (NFP ADVCC)*
 - modelling of timber supply scenarios on private and public land
 - First Nation views on the future
 - climate change drivers and context
 - conservation and biodiversity considerations.
- The report also contained the Panel's views on what a possible future might look like for native forestry in Queensland that balances jobs and the environment.
- The Panel's report and views are currently under active consideration by my department and will inform a policy decision by the Queensland Government.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 6

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to shortages in tick fever vaccine, will the Minister outline:

- What is the average waiting time for vaccine supply at present (July 2023) and what was it in July 2022?
- When was the Minister first advised of any delays to the supply of the tick fever vaccine?
- Has DAF conducted any modelling as to the effects on industry if vaccine supply is delayed?

ANSWER:

- There is currently no wait time for the supply of tick fever vaccine. There was also no wait time for the supply of tick fever vaccine in July 2022.
- The Minister was provided with early advice of the interruption to vaccine production status.
- A short delay in vaccine supply may mean that some producers have to reschedule planned husbandry procedures. No formal modelling has occurred.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 7

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to the Agribusiness Gateway to Industry Schools Project, will the Minister outline by year 2019 to present:

- (a) funding provided
- (b) number of participating schools
- (c) number of program participants?

ANSWER:

Year (Calendar)	\$	No. of schools	No. program participants
2019	155,000	32	*7864
2020	255,000	60	7417
2021	255,000	67	8380
2022	255,000	74	7469
2023	255,000	76	Available at end of scholastic year

In 2019, participation data (*) correlated with enrolments in agriculture related courses.

Figures for the number of program participants in 2023 are not available as data is collected at the end of scholastic year.

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No. 8

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

In regards to the Minister's announcement of 16 December 2022, "Biosecurity Queensland has recruited 10 new officers to bolster Queensland's biosecurity preparedness", will the Minister outline (a) the location each of these new officers are based from, individually and (b) the role of each of these new officers?

ANSWER:

(a) Nine of these ten regional preparedness biosecurity officers have been recruited to positions in Toowoomba, Charleville, Gatton, Dalby, Bundaberg, Townsville, South Johnstone, and two in Cairns. Recruitment is underway to fill the tenth position after a vacancy, and this officer will be based in north or north-western Queensland.

(b) While regionally based, these officers remain mobile and deployable across Queensland to work with a range of diverse stakeholders to ensure the state is prepared for biosecurity emergencies and protect the thousands of jobs supported by the state's agricultural industries. Priority activities include ensuring all stakeholders are aware of their role in preparedness and prevention activities in order that we continue to build Queensland's capacity to address biosecurity risks.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 9

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

Can the Minister please advise what, if any work, QRIDA has undertaken to expand the availability of loans to individuals and businesses in remote and rural communities in Queensland?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) is a specialist administrator of government financial assistance and legislative programs, including loans, grants, rebates, and subsidies, to Queenslanders in every corner of the State.

To best service the rural and regional community, QRIDA currently has over 35% of its workforce regionally-based, with a network of Regional Area Managers working from offices in Bundaberg, Cloncurry, Emerald (with regular visits to Longreach), Innisfail, Kingaroy, Mackay, Rockhampton, Roma, Toowoomba and Townsville, to provide primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profit organisations with the latest local knowledge and expertise on QRIDA's programs and services.

QRIDA maintain a consistent presence in both traditional print media, such as the Queensland Country Life and other industry publications, as well as digital and radio advertising to allow tailored messaging to the needs of each region and industry. Pop-up offices for ongoing loan products, such as the Primary Industry Productivity Enhancement Scheme (PIPES) as well as financial assistance for disaster events are a regular occurrence to better reach producers and industries in the regions directly.

The QRIDA regional team are dedicated to delivering high quality service and value, representing QRIDA at a wide range of producer and industry events and visiting with potential clients on property, travelling the region as demand dictates.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 10

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

Will the Minister provide (broken down by local government area) data on a) reports of feral cats, pigs and noxious weeds and b) funding for projects to address feral cats, pigs and noxious weeds, and advise on the sufficiency of funding?

ANSWER:

- a) There is no general reporting requirement for persons who have a General Biosecurity Obligation to manage the impact of feral cats, feral pigs or noxious weeds (invasive plants) to report to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries or their Local Government on the presence of feral cats, feral pigs or invasive plants or the management activities that they have taken to manage any feral cats, feral pigs or invasive plants that may be present.

The department works with local governments and other stakeholders to determine where invasive plants may be present in various parts of Queensland.

- b) The Queensland Feral Pest Initiative (QFPI) provides grant funding to regional collaborative projects that address invasive plant or invasive animal priorities as determined by the applying regional organisation or local government. Only a few applications have been for feral cats, with many more applications requesting funds to manage wild dogs, feral pigs and weeds. Since 2015, there have been seven rounds of QFPI with \$27.1 million allocated from the Queensland Government and complemented by a \$14 million investment from the Federal Government for a total of \$41.1 million.

The successful applicants to Round 7 of the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative were recently announced. This round will provide funding for ten recipients that cover a range of targets. The department is soon to enter administrative arrangements with the applicants for the delivery of those projects.

In coming months, Round 8 of the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative will open.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 11

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to page 3 of the SDS, will the Minister inform the Committee of the key agricultural commodities by region, and value of agricultural trends?

ANSWER:

Queensland's agriculture fisheries and forestry sector are central to our economy, regions and communities contributing over \$32 billion and employing over 374,000 good jobs across the supply chain.

In 2022-23 the sector has produced a record valuation of \$23.44 billion according to latest AgTrends data.

This new high for the 2022-23 eclipses the previous record of \$23.37 billion in 2021-22 and follows continued strong investment in agriculture by the Queensland Government. It is 16.28% greater than the average for the past five years.

Beef is our largest sector, with cattle and calves valued at over \$6 billion in 2022-23, and meat processing estimated to be worth almost \$2.8 billion.

Sugarcane and sugar processing reached a combined valuation of almost \$2.5 billion, while the Gross Value of Production (GVP) of raw cotton is valued at \$1.5 billion.

Beyond the farm gate agriculture supported \$4.42 billion value added in first round agriculture manufacturing.

Queensland is a leader in high value agriculture production. In 2021–22, we produced 95% of Australia's sugarcane, 70% of sweetcorn, 65% of sorghum for grain, 57% of macadamias, 53% of capsicums, 48% of mangoes and avocados. We are also home to almost 50% of the Australian cattle herd.

At the Local Government level, Toowoomba produced the largest GVP in 2022-23, valued at almost \$1.36 billion.

Nearby Western Downs had the only other billion-dollar valuation, coming in second for GVP at \$1.11 billion. This was followed by Bundaberg, Central Highlands and Goondiwindi.

By far the fastest growing region in 2022-23 is the Lockyer Valley, the value of its ag sector surging, up nearly 42% on last year's GVP off the back of strong recovery from the 2022 floods.

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2023 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 12

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to page 3 of the SDS, will the Minister outline for the Committee the work the department has undertaken to support innovative agricultural technology?

ANSWER:

A key priority of Queensland's Digital Economy Strategy is for industries and businesses to excel by providing access and support to adopt digital technologies to help them adapt, grow, compete, and innovate.

The Queensland Government is committed to supporting agribusinesses to digitally transform their operations, allowing them to become more economically and environmentally sustainable, agile, and resilient. Digital technologies are changing production systems, management and governance across agribusiness and food supply chains. The internet of things, artificial intelligence, augmented reality, block chain, big data and advanced robotics are transforming the way we do business, both domestically and globally. Emerging technologies will underpin the security of Queensland's food supply chains and agricultural jobs, ensuring Queensland's world-class products meet current and future market expectations as global trends evolve.

The development of the Queensland AgTech Roadmap is a key initiative identified in the *Our Thriving Digital Future: 2023-2026* Action Plan and ensures agribusinesses remain at the forefront of the digital revolution, ready to capitalise on these opportunities. It was also identified as an action in the *Advance Queensland Roadmap: Innovation for a Future Economy*, to ensure Queensland's existing and emerging priority industries and talent are globally competitive.

The Draft AgTech Roadmap was developed with input from agribusinesses, producers, AgTech developers, education providers, government, and investors, ensuring the accelerated development and adoption of AgTech is supported by those the roadmap serves. The draft roadmap's vision is that Queensland's sustainable agrisystem is a global centre for AgTech. The roadmap outlines five key focus areas with actions to achieve them. Industry and stakeholders support the development of the Queensland AgTech Roadmap and want to be involved in implementing the roadmap's actions.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) is progressing the \$5.5 million Digital Transformation in Agribusiness Initiative to improve traceability, biosecurity and food safety by supporting businesses to adopt digital solutions. The Agribusiness Digital Solutions Grant Program (the Program) is one of the key investments under the initiative, providing grants that are matched with funding by industry organisations to deliver projects that provide industry-wide outcomes.

Round two is now open until 18 August 2023 with grants for up to \$100,000 available for projects which result in the trial and adoption of digital solutions through the supply chain.

Nine industry-backed projects were co-funded through the Program under Round one. As a result of these projects, AgTech is being adopted, awareness created, and agribusinesses are supporting each other to explore options for issues that may have once been viewed as a barrier to adoption.

For example, EastAUSmilk led a project in which 17 dairy businesses invested in new technology that enabled real-time activity monitoring of dairy cattle. The information generated supported early detection and intervention for health conditions and helped inform breeding programs.

Access to a skilled, capable, and confident workforce is also key for digital agriculture to succeed. The Australian Prawn Farmers Association has developed a Prawn Farmers Digital Skills Training Hub. The industry recognised the need to act on the opportunity to create 1,200 new jobs over the next five years through forecasted industry growth. Sixty-eight employees have participated in the co-designed program.

DAF has produced three case study videos for the DAF AgTech web portal to share the stories from these and other projects to connect, engage and inspire other agribusinesses:

- The Queensland Oyster Growers Association has developed and adopted an Internet of Things network of sensors integrated with an industry dashboard to improve harvest timing and food safety quality assurance programs.
- The Australian Macadamia Society has helped growers harness weather stations, sensors, and soil moisture probes that provide real-time localised microclimate monitoring for enhancing production.
- A family-run beef cattle farm at Rolleston has adopted a digital workplace health and safety solution developed by the Central Highlands Regional Resources Use Planning Cooperation to help create efficiencies and save time.

DAF has also invested \$500,000 for the Biosecurity Commons project, to deliver world-class biosecurity modelling capability to help respond to future threats more efficiently. This investment has expanded to a \$1.8 million joint initiative between the Queensland and Federal Governments, the Australian Research Data Commons and four other partners including Griffith University. The project launched on 10 May 2023 and will empower researchers and decision-makers to produce consistent and transparent results without requiring coding experience or high-end IT equipment.

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2023 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 13

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to page 3 of the SDS, will the Minister update the Committee on the work undertaken regarding engagement with industry over carbon emissions?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Low Emissions Agriculture Roadmap was launched on 21 March 2023. The Roadmap is a ten-year plan to support industries to work towards their own emissions targets and the Queensland Government's zero net emissions economy by 2050 target through five focus pathways: livestock emissions, cropping and horticulture emissions, on-farm energy opportunities, carbon farming and landscape management and regions and supply chains.

The Roadmap was co-designed with government and key industry partners Queensland Farmers' Federation and AgForce Queensland. Co-design and co-ownership of the Roadmap is critical to its long-term success, and I would like to thank all of the producers and industry representatives that helped develop the Roadmap.

Engagement with wider industry on the development of the roadmap occurred throughout the project. Industry reference panel workshops for each of the focus pathways were conducted to refine the recommendations from an independent CSIRO report into tangible strategic and enterprise level actions to help lower greenhouse gas emissions. As part of public consultation, 40 survey responses were received from a wide range of agriculture sector stakeholders including Growcom, Australian Pork, Australian Prawn Farmers Association, Canegrowers, Timber Queensland and Cotton Australia. AgForce, Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) and National Farmers' Federation also sat on the Roadmap Steering Committee which provided oversight and advice on its development.

Many industry organisations have stepped up to the low emissions challenge. The Australian red meat sector has a target to be carbon neutral by 2030 and has invested millions of industry levy funds towards research, development, and leadership capability to achieve this goal. Australian Pork Ltd has also committed to be carbon positive and zero waste by 2025. Others, such as sugarcane, cotton, and poultry, have invested in lifecycle analyses to better understand where real emissions reduction is possible within the production system and supply chain. Officers from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) are working across the various agricultural commodity groups to progress the development of low emissions production practices and technologies, and trial these with producers to evaluate how these work within on-ground production systems.

DAF also helps administer the Queensland Government's flagship Drought and Climate Adaptation Program (DCAP), which brings together the best climate scientists, government and non-government agencies, producers and industry leaders to work on cutting edge research and partnerships. Under DCAP, is the Farm Business Resilience Program, which assists producers to incorporate climate considerations into long-term business planning. While the immediate focus is drought resilience and planning, this strategic assessment of their business and investment planning can also assist producers to start incorporating and planning for low emissions technologies and strategies. Various industry organisations such as Cotton Australia, QFF, Growcom and the Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland are working with DAF to ensure their producers are getting the support they need to access the Farm Business Resilience Program.

In partnership with MLA, the Method to Market project is working with grazing businesses to better understand their enterprise-level carbon emissions profile and on-farm opportunities to reduce and offset carbon emissions whilst maintaining a profitable grazing enterprise. The Method to Market project is investigating the feasibility of pursuing carbon neutral branded beef products and the opportunities and risks of participation in environmental markets, such as carbon markets and the emerging Reef Credits and biodiversity markets. The project also operates the Carbon Neutral Grazing Network which is an online forum for graziers to share their knowledge, experiences and aspirations around low carbon beef and sheep production. Currently the Network boasts over 600 members from across Australia.

Also, in partnership with MLA, Steak and Wood is investigating silvopastoral systems to provide producers with grazing systems that also deliver high quality timber from private native forest and hardwood plantations. This four-year project is seeking to develop guidelines to assist graziers to obtain the appropriate balance of trees and pasture, and will deliver improved beef quality, lower greenhouse gas emissions and an alternative income stream from a sustainably managed timber resource. DAF is also working with Timber Queensland to evaluate biophysical interactions and trade-off between trees and fodder growth, and livestock productivity, in commercial pine silvopastoral systems in northern Queensland.

The Land Restoration Fund (LRF) is Queensland's \$500 million fund investing in high quality carbon farming projects. The LRF invests in land management projects that not only keep carbon in the ground, but also deliver positive impacts or 'co-benefits' for our environment and communities. The LRF Program engagement program works with landholders interested in exploring carbon farming projects to reduce emissions, and through the Carbon Farming Advice Scheme helps landholders access up to \$10,000 worth of professional carbon farming advice from LRF Approved Advisors.

On 13 July 2023, national Agriculture Ministers released a National Statement on Climate Change and Agriculture. This high-level document presents a unified Australian vision on climate change and agriculture matters. It sets an overarching picture of agriculture's climate response, acknowledging and showcasing the work already underway, and affirming the commitment of all Agriculture Ministers in supporting the sector's climate response.

With clear national policy for zero net emissions by 2050 now in place, it is expected that more agricultural commodity groups will make emissions reduction commitments as they better understand the opportunities for change in their production systems. I would particularly like to thank AgForce, the Queensland Farmers' Federation and the National Farmers' Federation who have worked with my department every step of the way, and who are now working to identify and progress key industry-led implementation actions.

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2023 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 14

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to page 3 of the SDS, will the Minister inform the Committee of how DAF is assisting the Commonwealth when it comes to the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme?

ANSWER:

During the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) worked closely with Queensland Health to facilitate the arrival and on-farm or hotel quarantine of over 5 200 Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS) and Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP) workers, who took up positions within the Queensland agricultural sector.

The PLS and SWP were previously managed by the Pacific Labour Facility and the Department of Education, Skills and Employment respectively. The Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme is the result of the amalgamation of the PLS and SWP, which commenced in late 2021 with the single scheme becoming fully operational in July 2023.

Further changes to the PALM scheme have occurred with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) now managing the Australian-based operations of the PALM scheme while the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is now responsible for in-country operations.

The establishment of the PALM scheme has necessitated the development of new deed and guideline documentation which defines the agreement between Approved Employers (AEs) and DEWR. These documents were released in July 2023. Consultations for feedback have been ongoing since early 2022. Additionally, a new information management system for the PALM scheme has been developed and this will launch in late July 2023.

The PALM scheme continues to expand with currently almost 14 500 PALM scheme workers in Queensland, more than the combined total of PALM scheme workers in Victoria and New South Wales. More than 95% of these workers are engaged in the agriculture and meat processing sectors, predominantly in regional and remote areas.

Throughout all these changes, DAF continues to have an active role in the operation of the PALM scheme within the Queensland agriculture sector, working with a range of stakeholder groups including (but not limited to) employers, either approved under the PALM scheme or hosting workers via approved labour hire companies; community support organisations; Local Governments; Approved Employers of Australia; PALM scheme workers; and other State and Federal government agencies.

In 2022, DAF appointed two Workplace Liaison Officers (one based in the north and one in the south) that provide a tangible link between workers, AEs, hosting employers and DEWR.

Through this liaison, DAF has assisted in resolving issues relating to the PALM scheme for individuals, communities, and small and large agribusinesses in rural and remote regions. Further, DAF has assisted agribusinesses in accessing the PALM scheme.

Both agencies continue to meet regularly at the State level to support the implementation of the new Deed of Agreement and Guidelines and refer any issues of concern onto the DEWR welfare team for actioning.

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2023 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 15

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to page 4 of the SDS, will the Minister provide details to the Committee on the importance of biosecurity arrangements in terms of industry productivity?

ANSWER:

Biosecurity plays a critical role directly and indirectly in industry productivity. Effective biosecurity reduces risk and enables our primary producers to be resilient and prosperous, producing high quality food and fibre for Queensland, Australia, and our major trading partners. It also supports market access, protects our environment, infrastructure and other critical assets, and contributes to protecting our way of life.

Industry productivity is influenced by 'on-farm drivers' such as farm size, commodity type, and management and operational practice. Productivity is also influenced by 'external factors' outside of the control of farmers. These factors include seasonal conditions, technological progress, supply chain issues, government policy, market conditions and access to critical infrastructure. Our commitment to preventing, preparing for, responding to, and managing biosecurity threats plays a major role in supporting industry productivity and viability, and supports viable regional communities.

Australia's cost-sharing arrangement provides industry confidence for dealing with the real and potential economic impacts of pests and diseases. Biosecurity supports our sector to be profitable, competitive, and sustainable. Investment in biosecurity supports Queensland's \$32 billion agri-food supply chain and represents a strong return on investment for Queensland.

The value of Australia's whole biosecurity system has been quantified at approximately \$314 billion, reflecting an average 30:1 return on investment. Biosecurity isn't just about food and fibre, it also protects our environment, infrastructure and other critical assets, which have been valued at \$251.5 billion a year, and \$5.7 trillion over 50 years.

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2023 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 16

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to page 5 of the SDS, will the Minister update the Committee on what work Queensland Fisheries is undertaking with crab-pot clean ups?

ANSWER:

Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol Officers also conduct regular operations to rid Queensland waterways of abandoned and non-compliant crabbing apparatus.

Over the past 18 months, the Patrol has dedicated 57 days to removing abandoned and non-compliant apparatus resulting in the removal of over 1000 crab pots and traps.

Dedicated clean up days have occurred along Queensland coastline including the Gold Coast, Redlands, Brisbane, Mooloolaba, Noosa, Hervey By, Bundaberg, Gladstone, Yeppoon, Mackay, Airlie Beach, Townsville and Weipa.

At times, marine park officers, parks and wildlife rangers and indigenous sea rangers also assist with these dedicated clean ups. These clean ups complement the routine collection of abandoned crab pots that Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol officers collect during routine patrols.

Recovered equipment is stored for a minimum of 28 days to allow owners to reclaim items before it is responsibly disposed.

Crab pots which are used incorrectly or left in the water when not being used can become lost and may continue to 'ghost fish', trapping other fish and wildlife including turtles, sharks and crocodiles.

As part of its education and extension activities, the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol advises fishers of the following tips to minimise the loss of crab fishing equipment.

- Check crab pots regularly and remove them from the water when they are not being used.
- Ensure crab pots are heavy enough with enough rope attached to the float so they are not lost or pulled under water in strong tidal currents.
- Check gear regularly to avoid it being misplaced during tidal events.
- Ensure crab pots are set below the low tide mark and in a sufficient depth of water at all stages of the tide.

People who see suspected unmarked, lost, or abandoned crabbing apparatus, should record an accurate location (GPS coordinates) of the apparatus and report it to the Fishwatch Hotline on 1800 017 116 or by using the QLD Fishing 2.0 app, which now has more than 100 000 users.

It's important that people do not interfere with another persons' crabbing gear. This is a serious offence and carries an on-the-spot fine of \$1,548 or maximum penalties of up to \$77,400. Stealing crabs or crab pots is also a criminal offence and those caught will be referred to the police.

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2023 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 17

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to page 5 of the SDS, will the Minister provide details to the Committee on the recent decisions regarding black jewfish?

ANSWER:

Black jewfish are highly valued by the commercial fishery not just for their eating properties, but also for their bladders, which can sell for more than \$500 per kilogram.

Following a significant increase in commercial catch and increased recreational fishing effort in 2018, the Queensland Government introduced a precautionary total allowable commercial catch quota of 20 tonnes and reduced the recreational limit to one per person. Access to black jewfish by all fishers was linked to that commercial catch quota being reached and this occurred it was closed after just a few months in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Little was known about black jewfish, therefore a research project co-funded by Fisheries Research and Development Corporation was undertaken by department scientists to collect key information on their biology. This new biological information was included in the 2022 stock assessment and increased the confidence of the stock assessment results.

On 30 September 2022, the first east coast black jewfish stock assessment estimated spawning biomass is between 56% and 99%, with the indicative (median) at 79%. This demonstrates our track record of delivering world class fisheries science. Consequently, the harvest strategy recommended the total allowable catch be increased to 90 tonnes across all sectors based on the healthy state of the biomass. A total allowable commercial catch of 54 tonnes was set for the east coast inshore fishery for 2023, up from 20 tonnes in 2022.

Due to the high value of the product, it is suspected that there is a black market for the bladders that are then exported through other jurisdictions. The Federal Government is responsible for the regulation and control of exports.

The recreational bag limit has remained at one black jewfish per recreational fisher or two per boat, given concerns on the black market of black jewfish swim bladders. Additionally, the average size of the fish is large, and one fish provides multiple portions for the dinner table.

Fisheries Queensland are working with Northern Territory (NT) Fisheries and the Australian Fisheries Management Authority to identify potential future management actions to cooperate on the management of high-value finfish species such as jewfish. DAF is also monitoring potential to aquaculture this species in future based on new trials planned in the NT.

There is working group support for a spawning closure for black jewfish between November and January, noting reduced recreational fishing effort for this species during summer coincides with the annual barramundi spawning closure. Some working group members supported a four-month spawning closure to align with the peak spawning period of the species more closely.

The black jewfish example demonstrates the successful incorporation of scientific research outcomes to improve our confidence in stock assessments for important fishery stocks in Queensland. It also shows that when the scientific information is available, our harvest strategies work to sustainably increase the limits for commercial fishers and improve angler satisfaction and outcomes for our important recreational fishery sector.

It is estimated that these management changes that are now in place have provides access to an additional \$1.36 m worth of harvestable product to the commercial fishery each year. There has also been improved socio-economic benefits to recreational fishers by decoupling their access from the commercial total allowable catch limit.

Monitoring of this species is ongoing, and the harvest strategy will continue to ensure that stocks across the east coast of Queensland, and in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area remain sustainable for generations to come.

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2023 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 18

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to page 5 of the SDS, will the Minister inform the Committee of what Queensland Fisheries is doing with Fish Attracting Devices?

ANSWER:

Fish Attracting Devices, commonly referred to as FADs are providing recreational fishers with the opportunity to target pelagic fish species. These purpose-built structures are placed on our offshore waters to attract and aggregate fish in a specific location. They are particularly successful in attracting and aggregating pelagic fish species including mahi mahi, more commonly known as dolphin fish, wahoo, cobia, tuna and billfish.

The FADs Program was established in 2019, as part of the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017-2027. Over \$1.57M has now been spent on FADs with charter fishing businesses all enjoying access to quality pelagic fish species, particularly dolphin fish.

The FADs are also improving offshore recreational fishing experiences in Queensland, which also helps to reduce fishing pressure on overfished species such as snapper and pearl perch.

In 2019-2020, DAF designed and installed twenty-five surface FADs in South East Queensland. The response from recreational fishers and charter fishers was instantly positive.

The department's recreational fishing monitoring program reports a reduction in fishing pressure on snapper and pearl perch with 40% of fishers surveyed indicating they would have been targeting these overfished species if not for the FADs providing an alternative fishing experience.

Since 2020, the department has deployed a further four surface FADs off Weipa; twelve sub-surface FADs off Southeast Queensland, three surface FADs off K'gari, and four all-water FADs off Bundaberg.

The all-water FAD off Bundaberg attract fish throughout the entire water column, including pelagic and demersal fish species such as dolphin fish, cobia, trevally, cod, coral trout, and baitfish species, such as yellowtail scad.

There is now a total of 48 different FADs deployed as part of the program. The locations of the FADs were negotiated with other user groups, including the commercial fishing industry, to minimise impacts on access to commercial fishing grounds.

The department is now working in collaboration with the Carpentaria Shire Council to design and deploy of two all-water FADs off Karumba.

Two suitable locations have been identified through consultation and meetings with multiple stakeholders, including the commercial fishing industry and First Nations peoples.

These FADs are expected to be deployed in August 2023.

The investment in FADs has strengthened Queensland's world-class recreational fishing, while providing an opportunity for snapper and pearl perch stocks to rebuild. By encouraging recreational fishers to target species other than snapper and pearl perch, we ensure that future generations enjoy fishing for these iconic Queensland species.

In 2023-24, the department's FAD program will receive \$214,000 resulting in over \$1.607M invested in FADs over the last five years.

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2023 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 19

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to page 5 of the SDS, will the Minister outline for the Committee what opportunities Queensland's forestry has into the future?

ANSWER:

- The demand for timber in Queensland has never been stronger. Queensland continues to be a popular place to live, work and raise families. A growing population brings greater demand for timber in new buildings, homes, alterations and additions, as well as a wide range of infrastructure.
- Housing challenges in Queensland and key government priorities such as the 2032 Olympics and legacy infrastructure will continue to drive ongoing increased demand for timber.
- There are several opportunities for Queensland's timber industry into the future, not only in meeting increasing demand for timber products in construction, but also in leveraging the environmental, carbon, social, and economic benefits of timber.
- The use of timber plays a crucial role in Queensland's efforts to achieve a zero net emissions economy by 2050 as part of positive climate action. Carbon sequestration, an important factor in addressing climate change, is one of the greater advantages of growing forests for timber.
- Forestry is one of Queensland's oldest government agencies and has enjoyed strong engagement with First Nations peoples. Significant ongoing opportunities exist for First Nations communities in the forest and timber industry, particularly in regional and remote areas of Queensland including north to Cape York.
- The Queensland Government will continue to work with the Federal government to support industry development within rural and regional communities such as value-adding to current products, creating circular economies and carbon sequestration. To this end, I acknowledge the Federal government's recent decision to remove the so-called 'water rule' relating to plantation forestry.
- Queensland's timber supply will be well supplemented by the growing engineered wood product industry. Queensland is home to strong supporting research and technical capabilities, spearheaded by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Horticulture and Forestry Science Research Facility at Salisbury in suburban Brisbane. The Queensland Government will continue to invest in timber research and development, with a specific focus on improving processing efficiencies and fostering product innovation.

- In 2019, the Queensland Government announced the Native Timber Action Plan to support actions to have an internationally competitive and sustainable native timber industry in Queensland balancing both jobs and the environment.
- While the government made a number of immediate decisions when announcing the Native Timber Action Plan, such as ending native timber production in the South East Queensland Regional Plan area in 2024, a number of final policy decisions are still being considered under the plan.

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2023 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 20

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to page 18 of the SDS, will the Minister update the Committee on how many people were assisted through QRIDA in the 2022-23 disaster seasons and will QRIDA be prepared through this budget for the 2023-24 disaster season?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) is a long-standing delivery partner of the jointly funded Queensland and Federal Government Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), assisting primary producers, business owners, and not-for-profit organisations.

During the 2022-23 financial year, QRIDA delivered assistance for activated schemes under DRFA, including:

1. Tropical Cyclone Niran and Associated Low Pressure System (25 February – 3 March 2021);
2. Central, Southern and Western Queensland Rainfall and Flooding (10 November – 3 December 2021);
3. Ex-Tropical Cyclone Seth (29 December 2021 – 10 January 2022);
4. South-East Queensland Rainfall and Flooding (22 February – 5 April 2022);
5. Southern Queensland Flooding (6 – 20 May 2022); and
6. Northern and Central Queensland Monsoon and Flooding (20 December 2022 – 30 April 2023).

QRIDA approved assistance for over 6,380 eligible grant and loan applications, totalling more than \$124.78 million, represented by:

- a) 40 Disaster Assistance Loans for over \$5.58 million; and
- b) 6,347 Disaster Assistance and Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants for over \$119.19 million.

The Federal and Queensland Governments provide funding under the DRFA to assist the state in relief and recovery efforts following natural disasters. Funding remains available to eligible applicants for schemes under DRFA until the closure date of the specific event.

QRIDA has a longstanding flexible staffing model in place comprised of permanent and temporary staff to be able to deliver disaster financial assistance as required, which is scalable to align with the incoming volumes of applications for each scheme.

QRIDA is standing ready to respond quickly to any natural disaster events in the 2023-24 disaster season and will continue to review employment arrangements to ensure appropriate staffing resources are available to meet workloads and deliver these much-needed funds to affected Queenslanders.