

Inquiry into the impact of climate change on Queensland agricultural production

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To whom it may concern,

The climate changing is something farmers have been dealing with for generations.

The impact of climate change to our farming business (hay and beef) is the resulting increase in electricity, fuel, fertiliser and other input costs which is a direct result of government policy and human intervention.

To help farmers better prepare for climate variations, the government would benefit by working collaboratively with farmers by providing direct grants to them. Farmers would then be able to upgrade irrigation, stock watering bores, on farm water storage, exclusion fencing to control feral pigs and upgrade equipment eg more zero till and less emissions to have immediate benefits.

The Queensland State Government has invested at least \$183 Million in land and agriculture climate change programs; \$87M carbon farming projects, \$35M Queensland Natural Capital Fund, \$25M Land Restoration Fund, \$21.4M for Drought and Climate Adaption Program, \$7.5M Future Drought Fund, \$5M LRF Pilot Projects program, \$3M seed funding for Rural Economies Centre of Excellence to name a few. *Source* <https://www.des.qld.gov.au/climateaction/sector-action/land-agriculture>

The money spent on advertising, marketing and compiling pointless documents like "road maps" would be better spent on grants to farmers to upgrade infrastructure and machinery to be more efficient with less emissions.

As stated in "*Public Briefing – Inquiry into the Impact of Climate Change on Queensland Agriculture Production - 10 July 2023*", the agricultural sector in Queensland is predominantly still dominated by small to medium enterprises and family-owned farms.

There are approximately 41,000 farm businesses in Queensland (*Source Queensland AgTrends 2020-21*). State Government funding should go directly to these farm businesses instead of being eaten up by intermediaries. The \$183M would equate to a measly \$4K to each business. If the government is serious about climate change in Queensland agriculture, it should be ensuring farmers have access to grants to support upgrades.

Government support/subsidies for farmers in Australia are the **second lowest** in the developed world out of 52 assessed countries. (Source <https://farmers.org.au/blog/farm-subsidies-in-australia-the-facts/>). According to the OECD, government support to Australian farmers' revenue is just over two percent, compared to Norway 61%, Iceland 59%, Switzerland 55%, Korea 52% and Japan 46%. (Source <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/trade-investment/trade-at-a-glance/trade-at-a-glance-2015/agriculture-and-food-trade>). This minimal contribution is very alarming considering that Australia is a progressive country aiming to the world's best.

Our farmers are the best producers in the world and according to the recent ABARES report, "Australian farmers record below-average emission levels, particularly in cattle, specialist beef production and grains" (Source [How strong are Aussie's AG sustainability credentials? - Environment & liveability projects and advice - official NRM group for SEQ - Healthy Land & Water \(hlw.org.au\)](#)). However, the lack of government subsidies, onerous red tape, regulations and the government imposed changes in the name of climate change, will force many Australian farmers to close down.

In the "Public Briefing – Inquiry into the Impact of Climate Change on Queensland Agriculture Production – 27 March 2023", it was stated that Australian population is expected to increase to 35 million by 2050.

Unless the State Government starts to appreciate and support farmers by supplying grants, many farming businesses will cease and then Australia will have to rely on imported food from overseas; how will that be good for the climate or environment?

Whilst very limited support is provided through QRIDA Farm Business Resilience Plan / Drought Preparedness Grants, these documents are time consuming and onerous on farmers and only allow 25% funding. Many farmers, like ourselves, are unable to afford the remaining 75%. The option to then access a QRIDA loan to fund the remaining 75% is out of reach to most farmers due to the complexity of the application process, eg copious amounts of data and documentation required to be supplied. This was also highlighted by the Queensland Farmers Federation in their submission to the "Review of Rural and Regional Adjustment 1994 (DAF) August 2023". Additionally, the "concessional" rate, currently 5.64% for Sustainability Loans is very close to commercial lender rates anyway. The cost benefit analysis of this drought preparedness funding doesn't stack up, as many producers opting that it is not worth the time or effort.

In conclusion, if the Queensland Government is genuine about tackling the impact of climate change on Queensland Agriculture Production, they should direct more substantial funding straight to farming businesses as opposed to funding other parties.

We are joined by many others in our community who hold a similar opinion and we write this submission on behalf of our local grain and beef industry. There have been copious reports, investigations, and surveys submitted to this government that call for immediate and substantial support for our farmers. It goes without saying that producers have a vested interest in the sustainability of our planet; helps us help the rest of the world.

We would like you to consider this favourably as it impacts not only on our lives, but that of our children and would benefit the whole of Australia.

Yours sincerely



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