

## QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 64

asked on Thursday, 13 February 2014

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**MR HOBBS** ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES (MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise how his department is assisting drought affected landholders in Queensland?

ANSWER:

Since the Queensland Government's initial announcement on 30 May 2013 to provide a range of drought relief measures, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines has been involved in the delivery of two drought support initiatives.

### **Rebate of land rent increases for 2013–14**

This initiative provides drought-declared producers with a rebate on any increase in their leasehold rent in the current year. While individual rent increases differ from property to property depending on land valuations, some producers would face an increase of up to 20 per cent in rent payment which is obviously a cost increase difficult to meet when drought has slashed producers' outputs and increased stock management costs.

This drought support measure has escalated significantly since May last year as the drought has deepened. At that point, this rebate applied to 13 drought-declared local government areas (LGAs), and would have amounted to \$1.2 million in relief. As drought declarations have expanded to the current 42 LGAs (along with individually-declared drought properties), the value of this rebate has risen to over \$4.1 million.

In summary, as of 12 March 2014, this measure has provided a rebate to 5446 producers. The value of the rebate averages around \$750 per lease, but varies—being up to \$24,840 in the highest instance.

A very pleasing aspect of the delivery of this rebate has been the design and implementation of this rebate by the department. Lessees have not had to wade through eligibility criteria or fill out application forms to apply for this particular assistance. In order to reduce red tape and provide efficiency of service delivery, the rebate has been proactively delivered without any need for landholders to apply. Where landholders are eligible, the rebate is calculated by the department and adjustment notices are issued. Given all the concerns facing drought-declared producers, I know they appreciate that this is one administrative issue they will not have to worry about.

### **Waiver on the cost of annual water licence fee**

This additional measure administered by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines was announced on 21 January 2014 as part of the most recent additional drought support package.

The department is waiving the \$69.10 annual water licence fee to provide relief for about 14,000 of the state's struggling landholders in drought-declared LGAs. This

amounts to a total projected assistance of \$967,400 for this measure. The annual water licence fee waiver will apply from 1 September 2013 to 31 August 2014. Water licence holders in drought-declared areas will be advised by the department of the fee waiver when their annual water licence fee notice would normally be received.

Attachment 1 details the LGAs eligible for the water licence fee waiver. This annual water licence fee waiver will be available in additional LGAs that become drought declared

## **ATTACHMENT 1**

Below is a list of local government areas eligible for the annual water licence fee waiver.

Balonne	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Banana	(Effective from 1 March 2014)
Barcaldine	(Effective from 1 January 2014)
Barcoo	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Blackall Tambo	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Boulia	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Bulloo	(Effective from 1 January 2014)
Bundaberg	(Effective from 1 March 2014)
Burke	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Carpentaria	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Central Highlands	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Charters Towers	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Cherbourg	(Effective from 1 March 2014)
Cloncurry	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Croydon	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Diamantina	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Doomadgee	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Etheridge	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Flinders	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Fraser Coast	(Effective from 1 March 2014)
Gladstone	(Effective from 1 March 2014)
Goondiwindi	(Effective from 1 March 2014)
Gympie	(Effective from 1 March 2014)
Isaac	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Longreach	(Effective from 1 January 2014)
Maranoa	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
McKinley	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Moreton Bay	(Effective from 1 March 2014)
Mount Isa	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Murweh	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Noosa	(Effective from 1 March 2014)
North Burnett	(Effective from 1 March 2014)
Paroo	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Quilpie	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Richmond	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
South Burnett	(Effective from 1 March 2014)
Southern Downs	(Effective from 1 March 2014)
Sunshine Coast	(Effective from 1 March 2014)
Toowoomba	(Effective from 1 March 2014)
Western Downs	(Effective from 1 March 2014)
Winton	(Effective from 1 September 2013)
Woorabinda	(Effective from 1 September 2013)