

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1251

asked on Wednesday, 19 September 2018

MR P WEIR ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES, MINES AND ENERGY (HON DR A LYNHAM)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the waiver on fixed charges under Tariff 66 for farmers requiring drought relief—

Will the Minister consider automatically applying it to those who are in a drought declared area to negate the need for the farmer to apply, given that a physical address appears on Ergon Energy accounts?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government's state-wide Drought Relief from Electricity Charges Scheme (DRECS) provides relief from supply charges on electricity accounts used to pump water for farm or irrigation purposes.

The completion of an application form is a requirement of the scheme to validate that the affected customer meets the eligibility criteria. For example, not all customers using Tariff 66 may be irrigators and, therefore, would not qualify for the scheme.

The application process exists to allow farming customers experiencing hardship as a result of drought conditions to access the assistance in a number of situations e.g. for

- customers whose property is individually drought declared, not only those areas triggered under the government drought declaration process;
- customers using Tariff 62, Tariff 65 and Tariff 66; and
- customers using non-farm or irrigation tariffs, such as business tariffs, provided supporting evidence such as a statutory declaration is provided stating the proportion of costs used for pumping purposes on these tariffs.

To ensure consistency in the process and the proper consideration of all applications, including relevant billing information about the amount of supply charges to be waived or reimbursed, customers need to declare:

- They are the farmer of a property which is individually drought declared or within a drought-declared area;
- They have no water to pump or have severely restricted access to water; and
- Information provided in the form is complete and correct.

Customers of Ergon Energy can apply direct by completing the form available on Ergon Energy's website. Completed forms can be submitted to Ergon Energy by email, fax or mail. Non-Ergon customers need to complete an online form and submit it to the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy.