

## **Question on Notice**

**No. 906**

**Asked on 21 August 2018**

**MR P WEIR ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES (HON M FURNER)—**

### **QUESTION:**

With reference to the ongoing drought in Queensland and the weather outlook indicating no change in the near future—

Will the Minister consider committing additional funds to assist landholders in drought declared areas?

### **ANSWER:**

The Queensland Government is committed to supporting primary producers and regions impacted by the drought having provided over \$160 million on its Drought Assistance Package since the drought began in 2013, with an overall expenditure of around \$670 million on measures, including mental health, education programs and concessional loans.

In addition, the Queensland Government recently announced \$9 million to fund:

- \$4 million for the Royal Flying Doctor's Service Drought Wellbeing Service;
- an additional drought supplement of \$2 million to the Tackling Regional Adversity through Integrated Care program to support extra mental health clinicians in drought areas and additional community grants;
- \$2 million for additional financial counsellors targeting small business in droughted areas; and
- changes to some of the eligibility criteria for the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS) to make the scheme more accessible, valued at \$1 million per year. DRAS provides freight subsidies for the movement of fodder and water and a rebate on the purchase and installation of emergency water infrastructure for livestock.

The Queensland Government has appointed two Drought Commissioners, Messrs Vaughan Johnson and Mark O'Brien, who have been engaged to report directly to the Government on drought related issues.

The Premier and Minister for Trade launched the Queensland Drought Appeal on 9 August 2018, with the Queensland Country Women's Association (QCWA) overseeing the funds from the Drought Appeal which has raised over \$2.5 million with a total of \$725,000 paid out to date.