Question on Notice
No. 541
Asked on 3 April 2019

Mr R Katter asked the Premier and Minister for Trade (Hon. A Palaszczuk)**—**

QUESTION:

With reference to the eligibility for assistance from the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) for businesses affected by the flood damage in the north west which disadvantages some businesses including kangaroo shooters—

Will the Premier instruct QRA to extend assistance to rural businesses damaged by the floods that are not yet covered?

ANSWER:

A range of assistance measures exist under the joint State and Commonwealth Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) to support individuals, families, small businesses, non-profit organisations and primary producers who have been impacted by the North and Far North Queensland monsoonal trough event during 25 January to 14 February 2019.

Although DRFA assistance measures are jointly funded by the Queensland and Federal governments, the guidelines that determine eligibility and policy are set by the Federal Government.

Category C grants of up to $75,000 for the most impacted primary producers and up to $50,000 for small businesses are available, but to be eligible they must meet strict criteria set by the Federal Government.

Category C relief measures are only available where a community is so severely affected by a disaster that standard DRFA relief measures are insufficient to support community recovery.

Primary producers and small businesses in some areas do not meet the thresholds or eligibility requirements determined by the Federal Government for DRFA Category C assistance.

For primary producers to be eligible for Category C funding, the Queensland Government must demonstrate that:

- more than 33 per cent of primary producers in the sector are directly affected;
- those primary producers have incurred losses worth more than 20 per cent of the Gross Value of Agricultural Production in the sector; and
- primary producer viability or production in the sector is at risk of disruption beyond the current season.

Other eligibility criteria must also be considered, including a primary producer’s right or interest in the land for purposes of a primary production enterprise; the percentage of their annual income that is derived from that primary production enterprise; and their intent to re-establish the enterprise.

For small businesses to be eligible for Category C funding, the Queensland Government must demonstrate that:

- more than 33 per cent of small businesses in the sector are directly affected;
- the average individual small business losses/damage are at least $75,000; and
- the community in question is at risk of losing essential businesses as a direct result of the disaster.

The Honourable Cameron Dick MP, Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning, has previously raised concerns about eligibility for Category C funding with the Federal Government and was advised that this matter would be considered in a future review of arrangements. Minister Dick has recently asked the Queensland Reconstruction Authority to once again seek a review of eligibility criteria with the Federal Government.

I encourage all impacted primary producers and small businesses to contact the Federal Government's Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority, who administer Category C assistance in Queensland, to determine what assistance is available for their individual circumstances and their entitlements under the Federal Government's DRFA eligibility rules.