

Question on Notice

No. 144

Asked on 9 March 2021

MR C BOYCE ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the Federal Minister for Water, the Hon Keith Pitt MP's, offer of a \$50m rebate, \$1 for \$1 with the State Government for the On-Farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate— Will the Minister match this rebate with a commitment of \$50m and when?

ANSWER:

To clarify, the Federal Government has not offered \$50 million to Queensland to restart the On-Farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate (EWIR); the \$50 million is the amount on offer nationwide. The Federal Government has offered to Queensland and other jurisdictions additional funding for the On-Farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate to 30 June 2021, but with certain conditions such as a matching contribution. The Queensland Government, along with other state and territory governments, has had to seek clarification from the Federal Government on aspects of its proposal, particularly in regard to the co-contribution aspects and backdating eligibility to when funds were last closed. The Federal Government has only recently replied.

The Queensland Government is now considering the proposal. It is a long-standing Queensland Government policy that it does not automatically match Federal Government offers for funding of schemes and each is considered on its merits.

It should also be noted that Queensland, unlike other states and territories, administers its own EWIR on which the Federal scheme has been based. The Queensland EWIR provides a 50 per cent rebate for emergency water infrastructure to supply water to droughted livestock. This Queensland Government funded program has been available since the beginning of this drought and the Government has committed to maintaining existing drought measures, such as the Queensland EWIR, while this drought lasts. In comparison, the Federal Government's On-Farm EWIR is a fixed fund limited life program where assistance is provided in a stop/start fashion as we saw last year when funds were exhausted.