

## Question on Notice

No. 1389

Asked on 26 October 2023

**MR T SMITH** asked the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities (HON M FURNER)—

### QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise what assistance is available from the Department for primary producers as we head into an El Nino period?

### ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is committed to increasing the drought preparedness of Queensland primary producers and reducing reliance on the provision of reactive in-drought emergency assistance. This involves providing producers with the tools to be aware of the risks associated with events such as drought and providing targeted assistance programs to assist implementation of on-farm measures to manage these risks.

Government messaging across social media platforms has been to encourage producers to prepare for the impacts of El-Nino, which are typically lower than average rainfall and higher than average temperatures.

In the 2021-22 State Budget, the Queensland Government announced a suite of drought grants and loans that are administered by the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) to replace the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS) (freight subsidies and Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate) which is being phased out and will no longer be offered should areas be re-drought declared. Importantly, unlike the DRAS program, these new measures are not contingent on being drought declared and are open to all primary producers, not just those in the grazing industry.

The principal preparedness measures available are:

- **Drought Preparedness Grants**, providing a 25 per cent rebate on drought preparedness activities identified in the producer's Farm Business Resilience Plan of up to \$50 000.
- **Drought Ready and Recovery Finance Loans** of up to \$250 000 at a concessional rate of interest.

The drought response measures are:

- **Emergency drought loans** of up to \$50 000 at zero interest with a two-year repayment holiday to assist with drought-related expenses such as fodder, water, fuel, wages and other expenses.
- **Drought carry-on finance loans** of up to \$250 000 if the Emergency Drought Loans are insufficient.

Further information on these measures is available on the QRIDA website at [www.qrida.qld.gov.au](http://www.qrida.qld.gov.au).

Further, in partnership with the Future Drought Fund, the Queensland Government delivers the Farm Business Resilience Program (FBRP) which provides structured training and

workshops to assist farm businesses better manage risks such as drought and natural disaster. Attendance at an FBRP workshop can lead to the producer developing a Farm Business Resilience Plan for their property which can assist in identifying the risks to the property and the steps that are to be undertaken to manage those risks.

Further information on FBRP and other research, development and extension programs delivered by the Queensland Government to improve drought preparedness can be found on the Long Paddock website at [www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au](http://www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au).