

Drought Program Reform

Drought Relief Assistance Scheme Transitions

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) commenced engagement on transition arrangements on 1 July 2019. However due to COVID-19, the implementation of Drought Program Reform will be postponed until July 2021. The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries will continue to work with industry throughout 2020/21 to further develop drought program reform. The Queensland Government has invested more than \$745 million in drought-affected industries and communities since the drought began and will continue to offer both drought and COVID-19 support.

There will be no impacts on businesses affected by current drought conditions. The Palaszczuk Government has committed to continuing support while this drought lasts and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

All shires and Individually Droughted Properties (IDP) that are drought declared will continue to receive fodder freight subsidies and the Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate through the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS) until that shire or IDP declaration is revoked. After revocation, businesses will still be able to access the livestock transport subsidies after the revocation for restocking for two years, and returning from agistment for one year, as per the current DRAS arrangements. This will also be the case for any drought declarations that occur between now and 30 June 2021.

Any shires drought declared from 1 July 2021 and beyond will not be able to access water and fodder freight subsidies. It should be noted that the Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate component of DRAS will continue in future drought assistance arrangements.

A transition on a shire by shire basis is to take into account local conditions and will be supported by the development of improved drought analysis tools for the drought declaration/revocation system by 2021.

While drought declared businesses at 1 July 2021 will remain on the current DRAS until revocation, businesses in any new shires that become drought declared from 1 July 2021 will be unable to access the freight subsidies under DRAS. However they will be able to access the proposed new programs which are to be implemented in 2021 as part of drought program reform.