

Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS)

Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate

The Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS) is offered by the Queensland Government and administered by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF). The purpose of the scheme is to assist primary producers whose properties are drought declared to manage the welfare of their livestock during drought, and to restore their herds after drought. The Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate helps with the cost of establishing water infrastructure to supply water for emergency animal welfare needs.

Eligibility

To apply for this subsidy, you **must meet** the following conditions:

- You are a primary producer. For the purposes of this scheme, a primary producer is a person or a partner in a partnership, company or trust who spends more than 50 per cent of their labour on, and derives more than 50 per cent of their gross income from, a primary production enterprise.
- You are a property owner, share-farmer or lessee in the grazing industry (beef cattle, sheep, dairy cattle, goats, deer or horses that are not normally hand-fed).
- Your property was within a State drought-declared area or had a current Individually Droughted Property (IDP) declaration on the date of the purchase tax invoice for the infrastructure.
- You have not introduced any livestock on to the property during the current drought or in the three-month period prior to the drought declaration, including any livestock taken on for agistment.¹
- The water infrastructure is installed for grazing livestock that you own, that are permanently residing on your property and are not agisted.
- You purchase and install the water infrastructure for a genuine emergency animal welfare need only, because either:
 - water is currently being carted or about to be carted on to your property to supply grazing livestock; or
 - your property could be reasonably expected to run out of water before the next expected inflow of water; or
 - there is a lack of available water for grazing livestock that is within a reasonable walking distance.²
- You have provided a Water Availability Statement that is approved and signed by a DAF officer that endorses your claim that there is an existing emergency animal welfare need on your property and that the water infrastructure you intend to purchase and install, or have purchased and installed, is required to resolve the emergency animal welfare need.
- You have purchased the water infrastructure within **six months** of the date of endorsement on your Water Availability Statement. All purchases must be made while the property is drought declared.
- Your application is received in Brisbane within **six months** of the tax invoice date for the infrastructure.

¹ The subsidy does not apply when livestock have been introduced or agisted on a drought-declared property, except where:

- older core breeding stock have been replaced with female weaners or replacement bulls; or
- a property owner introduces livestock to a drought-declared property from a property under the same ownership but with a different Property Identification Code (PIC) as part of an overall drought-management strategy; or
- you have served a relevant suspension period as outlined in the 'Introduction of livestock – suspension of DRAS' section of this document.

² A reasonable walking distance is discussed in the section 'Emergency animal welfare need' on page 3.

This rebate applies to the purchase and installation of water infrastructure, including:

- pipes, water tanks and water troughs
- drilling a new working bore
- water pumps and power supply used to run water pumps such as generators
- other materials or equipment necessary to install the above
- any freight component to purchase and install the equipment
- professional installation costs to install the water infrastructure.

Ineligibility

The rebate **does not** apply when:

- water infrastructure has been purchased and installed where there is not a genuine emergency animal welfare need
- The water infrastructure purchased and installed is to replace existing water infrastructure on the property
- water infrastructure has been purchased and installed for uses other than to supply water for grazing livestock (for example, to provide water for irrigation, intensive livestock, human consumption, or household use)
- water infrastructure has been purchased and installed in order to prepare the property for livestock returning from agistment³
- the water infrastructure that has been purchased and installed is excessive or superfluous to requirements in resolving the animal welfare need.

The rebate **does not** apply to:

- wages for your employees or your self-assessed labour or machinery costs, such as the cost of fuel
- any costs or labour associated with establishing a new dam, desilting dams or making dams larger
- any invoices from entities related to the applicant (for example, water infrastructure purchased from family members of the applicant or companies/partnerships owned by the applicant or that the applicant has an interest in)
- any repairs or maintenance on existing water infrastructure
- any costs or labour that are excessive or superfluous to requirements
- any water infrastructure or other items that are not included in your Water Availability Statement
- any costs associated with drilling of dry bores or test bores.⁴

Introduction of livestock — suspension from DRAS

This subsidy does not generally apply when livestock have been returned, introduced or agisted on a drought-declared property. When this occurs, access to all DRAS assistance measures will be suspended from the date the animals are introduced to the property and for an additional 16 weeks after the livestock, or an equivalent number, have left the property.

Non-breeders that are returned because they have been genuinely forced off agistment may remain on your drought-declared property for up to four weeks while further agistment is sought, before the suspension period begins.

³ You may be eligible to claim the rebate on water infrastructure purchased and installed in order to prepare the property for livestock returning from agistment if the livestock have been forced from agistment and you can provide a declaration and/or documentation of this fact.

⁴ Dry bores and test bores may be eligible for rebate where subsequent water infrastructure has been installed and the animal welfare issue resolved for the property.

Breeders genuinely forced off agistment and returned do not incur the 16-week suspension, provided a statutory declaration is presented with the application that indicates why the animals were forced off agistment. This is approved by DAF on a case-by-case basis.

Breeders not forced off agistment that are returned to your drought-declared property can remain on your property for a maximum of four weeks while further agistment is found, without incurring a 16-week suspension.

Weaners up to six months old can be returned to your property while it is still drought declared if weaning facilities are not available on the agistment property. A statutory declaration from the agisting property owner is required to support this.

All suspensions are lifted from the property when the drought declaration is revoked.

Emergency animal welfare need

For the purposes of this rebate, it is considered a genuine emergency animal welfare need when:

- there is a lack of available water for livestock that are permanently grazing on your property, or
- the water that is available will be insufficient to sustain the livestock on the property until the next expected inflow, or
- there is a lack of available water for livestock that is within a reasonable walking distance.

For the purposes of this rebate, a reasonable walking distance is generally considered to be not less than 2 km. While the distance that livestock will travel from water depends on topography, and on the class and condition of the animals, studies show that, in most situations, livestock graze within a 2 km to 3 km radius of water.

It is therefore reasonable to expect animals to walk for 2 km to access water, and any watering points that are placed at a distance less than 2 km apart would be considered in most cases to be excess to requirements unless the primary producer can provide evidence that demonstrates why their animals cannot walk 2 km.

In determining whether a property has an emergency animal welfare need you must provide information in a Water Availability Statement about the current emergency water situation, including the existing water infrastructure, watering procedures and watering points. You must also provide information on the steps you have undertaken to reduce the effects of drought and water shortages on your livestock and property, and provide detailed information on the new water infrastructure that you propose to install, or have installed, for the purposes of resolving your emergency animal welfare need.

The Water Availability Statement must be approved and signed by DAF officer, endorsing that there is an existing emergency animal welfare need on your property and that the water infrastructure you intend to purchase and install or that you have purchased and installed is required to resolve the water availability issue. The DAF officer may inspect your property or request further information from you before endorsing the Water Availability Statement.

Submission of an endorsed Water Availability Statement does not guarantee that you will be eligible for a rebate under the EWIR.

Rebate amount

The EWIR is **up to 50 per cent** of the cost of purchase, delivery and the labour cost to engage a person to install water infrastructure (if applicable), purchased for emergency animal welfare need.

How to apply

Step 1: Access or download the Water Availability Statement form at the DAF website www.daf.qld.gov.au or contact the Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23.

Step 2: Complete the Water Availability Statement form and send it to your local DAF officer (listed below) to be endorsed. Where possible, it is recommended that you obtain an endorsed Water Availability Statement before expending funds on water infrastructure. Submit your completed Water Availability Statement to one of the following DAF officers:

Charters Towers

Karl McKellar
DAF
PO Box 976
Charters Towers Qld 4820
karl.mckellar@daf.qld.gov.au
Tel: (07) 4761 5153
Fax: (07) 4761 5172

Longreach

Climate Risk Coordinator
DAF
PO Box 519
Longreach Qld 4730
droughtdeclarations@daf.qld.gov.au
Tel: (07) 4536 8302
Fax: (07) 4650 1233

Kingaroy

Damien O'Sullivan
DAF
PO Box 23
Kingaroy Qld 4610
damien.osullivan@daf.qld.gov.au
Tel: (07) 4182 1817
Fax: (07) 4182 1868

Toowoomba

Ross Ballin
DAF
PO Box 102
Toowoomba Qld 4350
ross.ballin@daf.qld.gov.au
Tel: (07) 4529 4168
Fax: (07) 4529 4199

Rockhampton

Ken Murphy
DAF
PO Box 6014
Red Hill
Rockhampton Qld 4701
ken.murphy@daf.qld.gov.au
Tel: (07) 4843 2637
Fax: (07) 4936 0315

Step 3: Once you have an endorsed Water Availability Statement and you have purchased your water infrastructure, complete the Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate application form and attach all necessary documentation, including a copy of the endorsed Water Availability Statement and tax invoices. You may submit more than one application to ensure that your tax invoices are received in Brisbane within six months of the tax invoice date for the infrastructure.

Application forms are available online at www.daf.qld.gov.au or can be posted or emailed to you if you contact the Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23. Keep a copy of your tax invoices for your records and submit completed application forms and tax invoices to the DAF Brisbane office at the below address. Please post or email applications to:

*Drought Relief Assistance Scheme
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
Level 6
GPO Box 46
Brisbane Qld 4001*

Or email to: DroughtDeclarations@daf.qld.gov.au



Supporting documents

DAF is unable to process rebate applications without copies of all corresponding tax invoices that relate to the purchase and installation of the water infrastructure being claimed. Please include copies of all tax invoices with your application. Remember to keep a copy of the application for yourself, as tax invoices will not be returned to you.

Minimum and maximum payments

The minimum payment for each application is \$25. No payment will be made for any claims under this amount.

The maximum level of financial assistance available under DRAS is initially \$20,000 per property, per financial year. **For the purposes of this scheme, all properties or land parcels included under a single Property Identification Code (PIC) are considered to be one property.** This scheme does not allow the splitting of partnerships, properties or land parcels to access more than the prescribed maximum amount.

The initial \$20,000 limit may be extended to \$30,000 if a Drought Management Plan (DMP) for your property is endorsed by a DAF Officer. Once a DMP is endorsed, the \$30,000 ceiling applies to the entirety of the current financial year and subsequent financial years. When a property with an endorsed DMP is in its third or subsequent year of being drought declared, the ceiling per financial year increases from \$30,000 to \$40,000. The ceiling extension does not retrospectively apply to previous financial years. Properties entering their third year of drought declaration with an approved DMP that have already reached their \$30,000 ceiling in the current financial year will have their previously submitted claims adjusted to reflect the new ceiling.

Once a drought declaration is revoked, the DRAS ceiling is the level the property was on immediately prior to the revocation of the drought declaration, and remains at that level for the period that the property is eligible to apply for DRAS. For example, if a property with an approved DMP was in its third year of being drought declared when the property is revoked, the DRAS ceiling is \$40,000.

Properties without a DMP prior to revocation can obtain a DMP, and the DRAS ceiling limit will be \$30,000 regardless of the length of the drought declaration. For example, if a property without a DMP was in its third or subsequent year of drought prior to revocation, the producer can apply for a ceiling extension to the limit of \$30,000.

Where you have received a payment that you are not eligible to receive, DAF reserves the right to pursue reimbursement, which may include reclaiming funds from any future eligible DRAS applications that you submit.

Processing times

DAF aims to process 90% of claims within 21 working days. Incomplete claims or claims that do not clearly meet the eligibility requirements may take longer. To ensure your claim is processed as quickly as possible, please make sure you have provided all of the required information and that you meet the eligibility criteria.

Payment method

DAF's preferred method of payment is direct electronic transfer into your bank account; however, you may request payment by cheque. You can indicate on your form which method you would prefer.



Assessment

DAF will consider all applications for emergency water infrastructure received within **six months** of the date of purchase noted on the tax invoice for the water infrastructure. Water infrastructure must also be purchased within **six months** of the endorsement date on your Water Availability Statement.

Applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria. DAF reserves the right to request further information from you, or from any business or individual you have engaged, to assist in assessing your application and to verify any information provided in your application. Failure to provide such information may result in DAF refusing your application. DAF also reserves the right to refuse an application, at its discretion, for any reason or for no reason, irrespective of whether the eligibility criteria have been met.

DAF may consult with members of your local drought committee to assist in assessing your claim.

Applications submitted may be subject to audit by DAF or its agents in order to determine compliance with scheme guidelines.

Fraudulent applications

By signing the application form, you are declaring that the information provided in the application form and supporting documentation is true and accurate. Providing inaccurate, untrue or misleading information may be a breach of criminal law for which serious penalties may apply. If any information provided in an application or supporting documentation is found to be inaccurate, untrue or misleading, legal action may be taken against you, including action to recover the subsidy.

Appeal and review process

If you are unable to purchase and install your water infrastructure within the six months after the endorsement date on your Water Availability Statement, you may request an extension by contacting the DAF officer who endorsed the statement.

If you are unsuccessful in obtaining an endorsed Water Availability Statement or disagree with the conditions of your Water Availability Statement, you may request a review of the decision by lodging a request with DAF. Your application will either be reviewed by the State Climate Risk Coordinator or by the Director Land Management. If you are not satisfied with the subsequent review of your Water Availability Statement, then you may appeal the decision by writing to the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries.

If you are declined DRAS assistance because your claim was received by DAF outside of the eligible time limit, you can request a re-consideration by writing to the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and outlining the reasons why your application was late. Payment of a declined claim may be approved at the Minister's discretion, if the Minister considers that there are extenuating circumstances that contributed to the late submission.

If you are declined DRAS assistance because DAF officers believe you do not meet the eligibility criteria (for example, DAF officers believe you do not qualify as a 'primary producer'), you may request a re-consideration by writing to the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and outlining the reasons why you believe you are eligible and including any additional supporting evidence. Payment of a declined claim may be approved at the Minister's discretion, if the Minister considers that the evidence provided by you demonstrates that you meet the eligibility criteria.



Producer responsibilities

While this scheme is to help you to manage the welfare of your animals, it does not discharge you from your legal responsibilities under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*. You should continue to manage the welfare of your animals, either by continuing to destock, by supplementary feeding or by carrying water, until such time as conditions on your property improve.

If you are intending to access groundwater, including artesian and sub-artesian water, you will need to ensure you have the correct authorisation to do so. This may include obtaining a water licence and a development permit. For further information on accessing and using groundwater, please contact the Department of Natural Resources and Mines on 13 74 68.

Guidelines

These guidelines are correct at the time of publishing. DAF reserves the right to amend, alter or change these guidelines at any time, and it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that they check the relevant website frequently. The guidelines that apply to your application will be the guidelines that are current at the time your application is received by DAF.

While DAF has taken all care in preparing these guidelines, DAF will not be liable in any way for any errors, omissions or variation to information in these guidelines or for not advising an applicant of any errors, omissions or variations to information in these guidelines.

DAF may cancel or suspend this scheme at any time without notice.