

Drought Management Plan

Application for Drought Relief Assistance Scheme ceiling extension to
\$30,000

A. APPLICANT DETAILS

Property owner	Thomas Thompson								
Trading name	South Queensland Grazing Company								
Contact details	Phone: (07) 9876 1234 Fax: (07) 9876 5432 e-mail: example@hotmail.com								
Property Name	"Plainview"								
Property Identification Code (PIC)	<table border="1"><tr><td>Q</td><td>G</td><td>I</td><td>C</td><td>4</td><td>7</td><td>7</td><td>3</td></tr></table>	Q	G	I	C	4	7	7	3
Q	G	I	C	4	7	7	3		
Local Government Area	Maranoa								
Have you previously submitted a Water Availability Statement for the Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No								
Financial year of extension	<input type="checkbox"/> 2012/2013 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2013/2014								
Have you received freight subsidy ceiling extensions prior to this application?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes in the last drought <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, 2012/13 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes. 2013/4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No								

Note: If you have already completed and had approved a Water Availability Statement for the Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate you may wish to consult and refer to that Statement in the preparation of this Drought Management Plan.

B. PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Please provide an overview of your farming enterprise, plus the long term effect of the drought on your land, pasture and livestock.

We normally run ~470 cattle (females, bulls and calves) in a rotational grazing system. Our property contains predominantly Buffel and Blue grass pastures on a Brigalow-Belah land type. The property is situated in a rainfall belt with a median annual rainfall of ~ 580 mm. The failure of seasonal rains and prolonged dry conditions means that surface water sources are scarce and pasture growth has declined. The risk of land degradation becomes greater as ground cover is depleted. The lack of good quality pasture has negatively affected our stock condition. As drought conditions continue, we will sell further stock with the objective of maintaining our breeder herd.

C. RAINFALL (ANNUAL TOTALS)

Years	Year to Date	Previous year	2 years previous
Rainfall (mm)	Jan 2014 8	2013 338.6	2012: 550.5 2011: 872

Please comment on the current rainfall compared to previous years and if possible attach monthly rainfall figures for the property, along with comments on the effectiveness of the rainfall and impacts of other seasonal conditions.

Rainfall during the last 12 months was limited and as a consequence it did not provide sufficient relief from the dry conditions.

January/February 2012: Good rainfall encouraging an excellent response in pasture growth - ground cover high as a result; plant diversity high.

Winter 2012: Heavy repeated frosts caused severe decline in pasture nutrition.

Spring 2012: No rainfall meant pasture quality did not recover from frosts. Dry pasture and dry storms combined to produce fires which burnt out 450 hectares of the property. High temperatures and evaporation rates left soil moisture and surface water levels low.

Summer 2012- 2013: Failure of summer rains meant little response in plant growth within burnt paddocks. Grazing pressure from macropods stripped paddocks of pasture. Burnt out paddocks still in disuse.

Autumn 2013 to Jan 2014: Rainfall in May provided brief reprieve from dry conditions, however, rainfall was not sufficient to refill dams. By November, 4 of our 6 dams were dry or unusable. Commenced carting of water from bore to troughs in central and northern extents of the property. November recorded decent falls which have generated some green pick within pastures, however, in general summer rainfall has consisted of isolated showers or storms - these have provided minimal relief to pasture and have not contributed to improve water storage levels.

Daily Rainfall (millimetres)

Plainview

2013	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1st	0	↓	44.0	↓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2nd	0	4.2	↓	↓	0	0	0	0	0	6.2	0	0
3rd	0	0	4.0	↓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4th	0	0	0	↓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5th	0	0	0	↓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6th	0	0	0	↓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7th	0	0	0	↓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8th	0	0	0	↓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9th	0	0	0	↓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10th	0	0	0	10.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11th	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11.4	0
12th	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8.0	3.2
13th	0	0	0	0	0	7.8	0	0	0	0	0	0
14th	0	0	0	0	11.4	0	0	0	0	0	10.2	0
15th	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16th	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17th	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.0	0	0	0
18th	0	9.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8.0	0	0
19th	0	4.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20th	0	2.6	0	0	0	0	25.8	0	0	0	0	0
21st	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.4	0	0	0	0	0
22nd	0	0	0	0	10.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23rd	0	0	0	0	17.8	0	0	0	0	0	17.6	0
24th	0	0	5.8	0	5.2	0	0	0	0	4.8	0	0
25th	0	0	8.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
26th	0	4.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
27th	50.4	↓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
28th	2.6	6.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
29th	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
30th	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.4	27.4	0
31st	0		0		0		0	0		0		0
Highest daily	50.4	9.2	44.0	0	17.8	7.8	25.8	0	1.0	8.0	27.4	3.2
Monthly Total	53.0	31.2	61.8	10.2	45.2	7.8	27.2	0	1.0	23.4	74.6	3.2

Annual total for 2013 = 338.6mm

↓ This day is part of an accumulated total

D. LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

- a) What is your normal long term stocking rate
1 beast : 6 hectares
- b) What was your stocking rate during the drought
1 beast : 11 hectares

Livestock Type	(a) Number of livestock on the property <i>prior</i> to the drought declaration	(b) livestock numbers on the property during the previous 12 months of drought	Impact of drought on livestock numbers (a – b)
Cows	280	160	120
Heifers	91	40	51
Steers	91	40	51
Bulls	9	7	2

Ewes			
Wethers			
Lambs			
Rams			
Other eg goats, horses, camels	6 Horses	6 Horses	0

- b) Have you at **any** time since you were drought declared introduced livestock onto your drought declared property? Yes No

If (Yes) please complete the following;

Date when livestock were introduced onto your drought declared property	Number and class of stock	Reason why livestock were introduced onto your drought declared property e.g. forced off agistment

Livestock management continued

*Forced destocking above normal turnoff during drought declared period (including up to 2 months prior to declaration)

Forced Destocking*	Year/Month	Numbers	Class
Forced Sales		2	Bulls
		115	Cows
		102	Weaners
To Agistment			
To Feedlots			
Stock that have been humanely destroyed on animal welfare grounds	25/05/2013 to 10/11/2013	5	Cows

Please comment on your livestock management practices, like early weaning, pregnancy testing, mating strategies and restocking program post drought.

We had 182 calves on the property prior to being drought declared. 102 of these calves were sold once they were weaned and achieved saleable weights. Reduced stock condition has necessitated the commencement of early weaning for the remaining calves and we intend to sell 40 of these post-weaning. We are progressively destocking in accordance with current capacity of the land and our ability to maintain stock in good condition.

Supplement feeding of stock - licks with fodder types incorporating: urea & molasses, cotton seed meal, lucern and millet hay. Yearly mating will be controlled so that peak nutritional requirements (6-8 weeks after calving) will coincide with peak nutritional availability. Pregnancy testing has enabled us to identify barren females to fatten and sell. We aim to restock and recommence regular breeding programs once seasonal conditions present. Maintenance of the breeding herd is our main objective and our destocking regime reflects this strategy

Bulls purchased during restocking phase will be selected based on reproductive history of dams and genetic lineage (considering: growth, fertility, libido and temperament traits).

E. GRAZING LAND MANAGEMENT

Please comment on your pasture type, availability, maintenance and the actions taken to reduce land degradation.

Our property has a mixture of native and improved pasture, predominantly Buffel grass and Blue grass.

Under favourable climatic conditions, we use a rotational grazing system (utilising 4 paddocks at a time and spelling the other 2). This system keeps stock in good condition and encourages recovery of grazed paddocks to ensure quality forage for future grazing and maintenance/improvement of land condition.

Due to the prolonged drought, pasture quantity is minimal in all south and central paddocks. Our northern paddocks retain decent forage availability and should be utilised whilst nutritive content is still favourable. As stock condition has declined below favourable levels, however, they are not motivated to travel long distances from existing watering points to graze this better quality pasture.

Stocking rates have been altered to reflect the carrying capacity of the land and in general this has prevented overgrazing and land degradation. Areas that have been heavily grazed are now fenced off to allow for recovery. When sowing pasture, a diversity of species are planted to encourage ecological diversity and land health.

F. PRESENT FEEDING REGIME

Are you feeding fodder to drought-affected stock? Yes No

Duration of drought feeding: Sept 2013 to present

<u>Fodder type</u> e.g. Lick, hay	<u>Ration</u> kg/head/day	Number and class and of livestock
Lick	1.7	Urea & Molasses: 160 cows
Meal	0.8	Cotton seed: 160 cows
Hay	4	Lucerne and Millet: 6 horses

Please provide further comments regarding the methods of drought feeding e.g. troughs, bins etc.

- Supplement feeding cattle with licks fed in plastic troughs.
- Cotton seed meal is fed simultaneously with licks.
- Feed troughs are located in southern paddocks only.
- Hay feeders used to feed bulls.
- Hay provided to horses in stalls.

G. WATER SUPPLY

Water Supply	Numbers/Condition
Bores (Artesian)	Nil
Bores (Sub-Artesian)	1 - Good condition, equipped with solar pump
Troughs	12 - Most in good condition
Dams	6 - 4 dry, 2 with low water levels
Creeks / Rivers	Nil

Please comment if the water supply has been an issue for your property and outline steps taken to conserve, manage or improve supply. For example desilting dams and installing additional poly pipe and water troughs to improve water supply and distribution on the property.

Note: If you have already completed a Water Availability Statement for the Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate you may wish to refer back to that Statement. If the water supply situation has changed since the Statement was completed please outline the changed circumstances from when the Statement was completed eg new water infrastructure that has been purchased.

Due to extremely high evaporation rates and lack of rainfall in recent months, our property is now experiencing increased stockwater demands. The property is divided into six paddocks (2 southern, 2 central, and 2 northern) with troughs in each paddock and tanks in the central paddocks. We have 6 dams on the property. 4 dams are now dry, and the water levels in the other 2 dams (located in southern paddocks) are approaching low levels. Our sub-artesian bore pumps ~ 1500 litres per hour. This provided adequate water flow to fill our troughs that were connected to the bore via polypipe. The troughs in the northern paddocks were not previously connected to the bore via polypipe however. As the bore is not centrally located on the property, we were having to cart water long distances - from the bore to the troughs in the northern parts of the property using private vehicles and a 1250L tank. This was to encourage our cattle to graze in the northern paddocks as they contain a greater quantity of nutritive pasture - however, the northern paddocks had insufficient water infrastructure and therefore they were being underutilised.

To resolve this we installed 2 water tanks (22000L capacities) in the two northern paddocks, adjacent to the existing troughs. We connected these storage units and the troughs to the southern bore by extending polypipe from the existing pipelines in the central paddocks. This required the purchase and installation of 8km of poly pipe (2 x 4km lines) and 2 pressure pumps to provide adequate water flow. By doing this, we are now able to transport water to all watering points more easily, thereby encouraging stock to graze the better quality pasture, and distribute grazing pressure evenly throughout our property.

In addition, we have recently desilted our dry dams to ensure their long term viability.

Water supply is now more secure throughout our property, however pasture availability is approaching low levels.

H. FUTURE PROGRAM FOR CURRENT DROUGHT

This section is vital in assisting Local Drought Committee (LDC) members with the decision whether to support your application to increase the freight subsidy ceiling. This section needs to address the strategies you intend to implement in the future to manage the drought conditions on your property.

In addition if you have received previous ceiling extensions in the current drought please outline the actions you have implemented from your last Drought Management Plan.

- Increase freight of supplement feed onto property and increase the supplement feed:pasture ratio.
- Prepare remaining weaners for sale
- Continue to fence off and desilt dry dams
- Enlarge dams in northern paddocks
- Continue to destock as climatic conditions dictate and aim to optimise market value of stock.
- Maintain nucleus of breeding herd
- Increase appropriate macropod culling program
- Continue to improve water infrastructure
- Maintain troughs and pumps in good working order
- Monitor water reserves and pasture growth - move stock accordingly
- Implement drought management strategies that minimise loss of equity whilst ensuring long term financial viability of enterprise.
- Ensure pastures are maintained to the best possible condition to ensure rapid recovery post-drought.
- Ensure pasture has recovered sufficiently prior to increasing stocking rate post-drought.

I. LOCAL DROUGHT COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT

I, (full name).....of.....
In the State of Queensland, do hereby declare that I endorse this plan and
recommend that the ceiling of DRAS be increased to \$30,000 for this property for
the financial year.....

Signed:.....**Date:**.....

J. APPLICANT'S DECLARATION

I, (full name)...Thomas Thompson.....of ..."Plainview", Bungil 4455.....in
the State of Queensland, do hereby declare that the particulars provided in this
application and supporting documentation are true and correct.

Signed:.....**Date:**.....

Please return completed Drought Management Plan to

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

or email to:

droughtdeclarations@daff.qld.gov.au