

Assistance for primary producers and small business

Special disaster flood assistance grants: Disaster event – Queensland flooding, November to December 2010

Special disaster flood assistance grants of up to \$25,000 are available to help small businesses and primary producers in Queensland affected by the floods.

These grants will allow eligible applicants to pay for costs arising out of direct damage caused by the floods.

Small businesses and primary producers in the following local government areas may be eligible for this assistance:

- Banana
- Barcaldine
- Bundaberg
- Central Highlands
- Cherbourg
- Lockyer Valley
- North Burnett
- Scenic Rim
- Somerset
- South Burnett
- Southern Downs
- Western Downs
- Woorabinda

The above list of local government areas is current as at 3 January 2011. More areas may be added as this flooding event continues to develop. Please refer to the QRAA or DEEDI website for the most up to date information.

There are two types of grants:

- Tier 1 grants of up to \$5,000 will be immediately available to assist with the early recovery effort.
- Tier 2 grants of up to \$20,000 will be provided on proof of expenditure. With the Tier 1 grants included, assistance up to a total of \$25,000 will be available.

What is eligible expenditure?

The assistance enables primary producers to cover the costs associated with cleaning and restoration activities including:

- purchasing, hiring or leasing plant, equipment or materials to clean or resume business activities
- clearing or disposing of debris and damaged goods or injured or dead livestock
- repairing buildings or fittings in buildings other than houses
- repairing or reconditioning essential plant or equipment
- repairing roads, fences and dams and other essential infrastructure
- leasing temporary premises
- repairing or restoring fields and purchasing fodder or saving crops or feed for livestock
- replacing lost or damaged stock (other than livestock)
- maintain the health of livestock or poultry
- engaging a person to clean or conduct a safety inspection of premises
- paying additional wages to an employee to assist with the clean-up and restoration work.

The assistance enables small businesses to cover the costs associated with cleaning and restoration activities including:

- purchasing, hiring or leasing plant, equipment or materials to clean or resume business activities (including stock replacement)
- clearing or disposing of debris and damaged goods
- repairing buildings or fittings in buildings other than houses
- leasing temporary premises for the purpose of resuming trading
- engaging a person clean or to conduct a safety inspection of premises
- paying additional wages to an employee to assist with the clean-up and restoration work.

Purchase of livestock is not provided for under this grant scheme. However, QRAA provides concessional NDRRA loans of up to \$250,000 for this purpose. Contact QRAA on 1800 623 946.

This grant scheme does not cover repairing houses/dwellings or repairing/replacing household goods. For more information on household assistance, contact 1800 173 349 or visit www.communities.qld.gov.au

For more detail on eligible expenditure for small businesses and primary producers please contact QRAA on 1800 623 946 or visit www.qraa.qld.gov.au.

What proof of expenditure is required?

Evidence of damage and advice of likely eligible expenditure is all that is required for Tier 1 grants of up to \$5000. However, evidence of expenditure will need to be retained until 30 September 2012 as you may be subject to a subsequent audit by QRAA, and if you also want to access Tier 2 grants.

To access Tier 2 grants, tax invoices, official receipts and/or bank statements will be required, as will tax invoices, official receipts and/or bank statements for the initial Tier 1 grant.

What if I am unable to pay for the expenditure up front?

Expenditure is not required prior to claiming a Tier 1 grant.

Hardship provisions for Tier 2 grants will waive the requirement for prior expenditure for those in financial hardship.

How many times can I claim?

Applicants will be able to claim for individual expenditure items on separate forms or together on one form, but cannot claim more than the ceiling of \$25,000 for any one business.

If I have more than one business, can I claim for each business?

If each business is at a separate location and able to operate as a viable entity in its own right, a separate claim may be able to be made for each entity. Contact QRAA to clarify your circumstances before lodging your application.

What if I have insurance?

If you have insurance for your business, it is essential for you to lodge a claim against your policy in respect of any loss or damage you have suffered.

Any application for Tier 2 recovery grants will not be assessed until such time as you produce written evidence from your insurance company regarding the result of your claim.

Is the grant taxable?

Yes, but many of the expenditure items may be legitimate business expenses for tax purposes. It is recommended that you talk to your financial adviser about this matter.

What if I don't spend the entire Tier 1 grant?

You are expected to repay unspent Tier 1 grants. QRAA may conduct an audit of the recovery grant scheme and you are required to keep proof of expenditure until 30 September 2012.

Are there penalties for false claims?

Yes. Penalties can apply under the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994* or the Criminal Code.

Can I apply for an individual grant for a collaborative effort (eg if two or more producers combine to freight fodder)?

Yes, for their individual share of the cost. Clarify the arrangements with QRAA.

How long will these grants be available?

The grant scheme will run until 30 September 2011.

These grants have been provided to members of the Queensland community in recognition of the severe widespread damage to small businesses and primary industries. To find out more about the grants contact QRAA on 1800 623 946 or www.qraa.qld.gov.au

Freight subsidies, concessional loans and financial counselling

Primary producers and small businesses may also be eligible for concessional loans through QRAA of up to \$250,000 and primary producers can access freight subsidies up to \$5,000 through DEEDI.

Eligible shires for this assistance include:

- Balonne
- Banana
- Barcaldine
- Blackall-Tambo
- Bundaberg
- Central Highlands
- Cherbourg
- Gladstone
- Goondiwindi
- Isaac
- Lockyer Valley
- Longreach
- Maranoa
- Murweh
- North Burnett
- Rockhampton
- Scenic Rim
- Somerset
- South Burnett
- Southern Downs
- Toowoomba
- Western Downs
- Woorabinda

The above list of local government areas is at 3 January 2011. More areas may be added as this flooding event continues to develop. Please refer to the QRAA or DEEDI website for the most up to date information.

Primary producers outside of these shires who have been impacted by flooding and wish to access this assistance can apply for an Individually Disaster Stricken Property (IDSP) declaration.

To find out more about the concessional loans contact QRAA on 1800 623 946 or www.qraa.qld.gov.au.

The Queensland Government also offers a free and confidential financial counselling service for

primary producers to help manage floods and other impacts. A qualified financial counsellor will spend time with you exploring the issues and problems you are facing, help you understand your current financial position, and assess options for improvement.

To find out about the freight subsidies, book a Farm Financial Counsellor or make an application for an Individually Disaster Stricken Property contact the Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23 or www.deedi.qld.gov.au

Fodder assistance

The Queensland Government and AgForce are assisting with coordination of fodder drops for those primary producers in need of assistance.

Anyone who believes they need fodder drops, or those wishing to donate fodder, should contact these coordinators:

- Danielle Hogarth, AgForce Regional Manager, on 0427 021 370 or
- Ken Murphy, DEEDI Senior Beef Extension Officer, on 0419 658 412

Expenditure on fodder drops for stranded livestock is an eligible activity for special disaster flood assistance grants in the designated Council areas.

To find out more about this assistance contact the Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23.

Pests and diseases

Flooding increases the risks of pest and disease outbreaks, and early intervention is critical to limiting the damage. You can help by remaining vigilant.

As you begin clearing debris, be alert for any signs of diseases or pests e.g. sick animals and rotting vegetation. Address immediate animal welfare needs.

As part of your damage assessment, note the condition of plants and animals. Monitor any change to these conditions over the coming days.

For advice on the best course of action for flooded pastures and crops or stranded animals, or if have any concerns about pest and disease outbreaks in plants or animals contact the Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23 or www.deedi.qld.gov.au

To find lost animals or their owners go to www.donate.rspcaqld.gov.au/lostanimal

Business scams

Be alert to scams that take advantage of natural disasters to target small business. For more information on business scams, contact the Office of Fair Trading on 13QGOV (13 74 68).

Updates to this factsheet

This factsheet is current as of 3 January 2011. DEEDI will continue to update this factsheet as required. Please refer to www.deedi.qld.gov.au for the most recent version of this fact sheet.