Primary Industries Prosper 2050
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This submission is provided to:

Department of Primary Industries

Submitted via DPI Engagement Hub

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- Australian Cane Farmers Association
- Queensland United Egg Producers
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About the Queensland Farmers' Federation

The Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) is the united voice of agriculture in Queensland.

Our members are agricultural peak bodies who collectively represent more than 13,000 farmers who produce food, fibre and foliage across the state.

QFF's peak body members come together to develop policy and lead projects on the key issues that are important to their farmer members and the Queensland agriculture sector.

Together, we form a strong, unified voice leveraging our effectiveness by working together to drive policy and initiatives that support a strong future for Queensland agriculture.

Introduction

QFF welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the *Queensland Primary Industries Prosper 2050* (the Blueprint). QFF supports the development of a strategic, long-term framework that charts a clear, practical, and inclusive path for the future of our primary industries. Our submission offers constructive, evidence-based feedback drawing on the collective experience of our diverse member organisations, spanning commodities, regions, and business scales.

We are committed to assisting in shaping a Blueprint that is both ambitious and grounded; one that reflects the lived realities of growers and producers, fosters cross-sectoral innovation, and positions Queensland agriculture as a global leader in profitable and sustainable food, fibre, and foliage systems.

QFF regards this Blueprint as a timely and necessary economic instrument for Queensland's primary industries. It must actively enable farm business profitability, drive regional investment, and support long-term resilience and competitiveness. It must empower the sector not just to endure the challenges of the next 25 years, but to lead, economically, environmentally, and socially, with profitability and productivity at its core.

For the Blueprint to have real impact, it must go beyond high-level aspirations. It must not only be co-designed with industry, but also underpinned by dedicated state and federal resourcing, and translated into tangible, actionable outcomes that deliver lasting value. This must include embracing farmers and communities for where they are, not where policy imagines them to be.

Delivering on the priorities of the Blueprint will require strong policy alignment, long-term funding commitments, and genuine partnerships between government, industry, research bodies, commercial entities, and rural and regional agricultural communities. Without these foundations, there is a real risk that the Blueprint will mirror the fate of past strategies and roadmaps: well-intentioned, but ultimately under-delivered, leading to diminished industry confidence and a failure to realise critical opportunities for timely action. Clear, measurable milestones with a commitment to accountability of progress will be critical to the success of the Blueprint.

Submission

QFF welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the Department of Primary Industries Prosper 2050.

We provide this submission without prejudice to any additional submission from our members or individual farmers.

Summary of feedback

Strategic area	QFF's position and vision	Critical gaps identified	Key recommendations
QFF's response to the Blueprint's vision	The vision must be measurable and farmer-centric, prioritising profitability, resilience, and generational renewal. Core enablers (water, energy, land use, biosecurity, disaster resilience) must be integral and directly linked to business viability.	The vision needs to be underpinned by the critical challenges including climate risks, input volatility, workforce shortages, biosecurity, and infrastructure gaps. Innovation and sustainability are sidelined, and core enablers.	Whilst we support the vision in its intent, we feel there is an opportunity to refine the vision to explicitly reflect operating realities and future pressures. Embed measurable outcomes (e.g. farm income growth, water/energy productivity, digital access, resilience indicators). Elevate core enablers as central pillars.
QFF's response to the five-year action plans	Five-year plans alone are insufficient. Complement them with mandatory one- and three-year plans which are strongly linked to milestone timelines to maintain momentum, allow course corrections, and deliver measurable outcomes.	The current approach needs to be more clearly defined and tied to deliverable milestones, reflecting that the success of the Blueprint largely lies in the ability to deliver on the associated action plans.	Implement mandatory one- and three-year plans with actions strongly linked to clear timeframes. Require genuine co-design with stakeholders. Align with regional and state strategies, enforce measurable outcomes, and establish transparent, adaptive oversight and management with strong, clearly articulated leadership.
Critical omissions from the Blueprint	Foundational enablers (Biosecurity, water, energy, land-use, resilience, and risk management) must be embedded as system-wide priorities that underpin all transformation efforts.	These enablers are conspicuously absent or not particularly visible, with poor coordination and insufficient resources undermining their productivity	Elevate biosecurity to a standalone priority. Develop an integrated water strategy. Prioritise energy reform. Embed resilience, risk management and climate adaptation into core planning. Develop fit for purpose land planning frameworks that will protect

		contribution potential.	and enhance critical agricultural land and drive best practice coexistence.
Coexistence and community support	Agriculture must be recognised as a permanent, legitimate land use, central to regional economies and environmental stewardship.	Current framing treats agriculture as needing public approval ("social licence"), with inadequate planning protections, governance, and offset mechanisms. This is not the main success indicator for coexistence.	Reframe around agricultural viability and shared governance. Embed agriculture in statutory land-use planning. Establish co-designed regional coexistence frameworks and fair offset policies. Assign an appropriate indicator of success.
Market growth and value adding	Market growth must be driven by ensuring farm viability, reducing input costs, and providing equitable access to infrastructure and innovation.	Profitability remains poor; support is fragmented; regional infrastructure deficits severely limit participation in value adding opportunities.	Align strategies with profitability. Expand shared-use processing infrastructure. Support waste-to-value, competitive advantages and cooperative models.
Skilled and agile workforce	A skilled, inclusive, and digitally capable workforce is foundational to innovation, resilience, and any future growth.	Training is misaligned with industry needs; proven programs are underfunded; retention challenges persist.	Scale place-based models like SmartAg and ADSWPP. Integrate workforce development into innovation ecosystems. Track long-term outcomes including retention, diversity, and enterprise productivity. Highlight the role artificial intelligence and technology needs to play and support adoption. Assist farmers in making informed decisions in relation to tech adoption. Work with industry, universities and TAFE to create clear pathways into agriculture employment and careers.

Shared infrastructure	Strategic, climate-resilient infrastructure is critical for competitiveness, value-adding, and connectivity.	Infrastructure plans lack clarity and scope; investments are fragmented; access inequities remain unaddressed.	Clarify scope as "critical enabling infrastructure." Prioritise investment in logistics, digital, water, energy, telecommunications and biosecurity. Use outcome-focused success indicators. Create regional infrastructure dashboards. Prioritise the development of a strategic infrastructure plan that is funded to build capacity and resilience in our road and transport networks.
Accelerated innovation, readiness and adoption	Innovation must be demand-driven, regionally embedded, and supported by robust infrastructure, skills, and advisory services.	The focus is narrow on adoption; systemic barriers such as poor connectivity and skills gaps remain unaddressed. The success indicator here is vague and not necessarily meaningful	Adopt a comprehensive systems approach: build regional innovation hubs, fund co-designed projects, expand advisory and digital skills support. Prioritise scalable, ROI-focused, producer-relevant AgTech solutions. Support farmers to make informed decisions.
Confidence in system settings	Regulatory frameworks must be streamlined, coordinated, and adaptive to provide certainty, encourage investment, and foster innovation.	Current regulatory systems are complex, fragmented, and outdated, undermining confidence and stalling progress. The success indicator here is one dimensional and not meaningful.	Establish integrated cross-agency regulatory frameworks immediately. Define and measure regulatory burden transparently. Drive smarter regulation and regional co-design to strengthen legitimacy and impact. Replace success indicator with a more meaningful measure.

QFF response to the Blueprint's vision

The draft blueprint vision for 2050 is: *Queensland's primary industries are productive, profitable and sustainable for future generations. We are the backbone of our economy and communities.*

QFF acknowledges the intent of the draft vision is to set a positive direction for the future of Queensland's primary industries. However, in its current form, the vision lacks the clarity, ambition, and strategic depth required to drive the transformation needed over the next 25 years. We believe it does not adequately reflect the complexity of the operating environment, or the bold foresight required to address accelerating challenges, such as input volatility, climate adaption, water scarcity, biosecurity risks, workforce shortages, and geopolitical instability.

To be credible and actionable, a long-term vision must also be underpinned by a firm commitment to preparedness, resilience, and agility. These are not aspirational values but practical imperatives to ensure Queensland's primary industries remain competitive in an increasingly dynamic global context. Central to this is placing the farmer at the heart of agricultural transformation. This means embedding profitability and productivity as core outcomes, alongside safeguarding farm viability, promoting fair income for producers, investing in generational renewal, and ensuring that environmental sustainability and innovation are enablers, not burdens. These elements are underrepresented or absent from the draft vision.

Queensland has a unique opportunity to lead both nationally and globally in sustainable food and fibre production, regional economic resilience, and climate-smart innovation. A reimagined vision must speak with confidence and clarity to this leadership potential, explicitly recognising:

- The diversity, capability, and strategic importance of Queensland's primary industries.

- Their critical role in a profitable, resilient economy and strong regional communities.

- The transformative potential of innovation, digital technology, and producer-led knowledge systems.

- The importance of intergenerational equity, with clear pathways for young and emerging leaders in agriculture.

Importantly, the vision must be grounded in the real-world experiences of growers and producers. It must provide a clear line of sight to the practical tools, reforms, and support systems required to overcome entrenched structural barriers. This includes addressing the economic conditions that underpin long-term industry growth, including:

- The economic marginality or unviability of many farmers under current operating conditions.

- A lack of targeted triage or tailored support for the most vulnerable sectors or regions, where transition or recovery is urgently required.

- Poor access to transport, supply chain, and digital infrastructure in remote regions.

- Inadequate water and energy planning tailored to regional agricultural needs.

- Inconsistent land use policies and weak protection of strategic agricultural land.

- The compounding effects of biosecurity incidents and increasing risks across the supply chain.

- Fragmented and overly complex legislation and costly compliance that impedes timely innovation and adaptation.

Without this, the vision risks remaining aspirational in language but disconnected from practical delivery. To ensure the vision is translated into real outcomes, QFF recommends that measurable indicators of success should underpin the vision. These must include:

- Growth in net farm income and business profitability across regions and commodities.

- Improved water and energy productivity per hectare or per dollar of output.

- Increased participation of young and early-career farmers through succession and workforce programs.

- Greater access to digital infrastructure and uptake of climate-smart technologies.

- Measurable improvements in environmental outcomes such as soil health, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration.

- A fit-for-purpose regulatory framework and increased adoption of innovation.

- Enhanced resilience indicators (e.g., biosecurity response capacity, infrastructure reliability, and supply chain continuity during disruptions).

QFF recommends refining the draft vision to be both aspirational and grounded; motivating collective action while remaining reflective of the live experiences of growers and producers and their capacity to lead a profitable, sustainable, and resilient agriculture.

QFF response to the five-year actions plans

The Blueprint proposes that five-year action plans will be designed to identify priority actions and deliver on the draft vision. The first milestone is to grow Queensland's primary production output to $30 billion by 2030 (including first-round processing, up from the current $22 billion).

The Blueprint's proposal to introduce five-year action plans as a mechanism for identifying priority actions and delivering on its draft vision is a positive and necessary step. However, the effectiveness of this approach will depend not only on the ambition of targets (i.e., growing Queensland's primary production output to $30 billion by 2030) but on the design, responsiveness, and flexibility of the action planning framework itself. QFF supports this growth target but would like to emphasise that achieving it will require implementation pathways that are both strategically sound and adaptable over time.

The concept of five-year action plans is directionally aligned with best practice. However, the proposed timeframe will likely limit its responsiveness. To ensure the action plans remain relevant, responsive, and effective over time, QFF recommends the addition of complementary one- and three-year action plans. We are of the view that these shorter-term plans will be more instrumental in maintaining momentum, enabling timely course corrections, and delivering measurable, place-based outcomes. The actions within the action plan need to be directly tied to timeframes to ensure a commitment to delivery. Without this, there is a real risk of actions stagnating and the delivery plan failing.

The proposed structure appears overly centralised and top-down, which risks limiting responsiveness, reducing local ownership, overlooking the realities of regional development. Queensland agriculture is deeply regional and commodity-specific, shaped by highly localised factors such as climate variability, infrastructure access, community dynamics, and sectoral differences. Planning must be grounded in this local knowledge and co-designed with regional stakeholders from the outset. These complex and diverse conditions require a more decentralised approach, supported by triaged, place-based planning and resource allocation tailored to regional and commodity-specific priorities.

QFF recommends structuring all action plans, across all timeframes in 1 year, 3 year and 5 year goals, around the proposed core dimensions:

1. Support both whole-of-sector and regionally tailored initiatives.

2. Address commodity-specific requirements, such as resource (water and energy) intensity, processing access, and seasonality).

3. Be informed by regional contexts, including climate, infrastructure, and community needs.

4. Embed transformation enablers such as water, energy, digital systems, trade access, workforce, and climate readiness.

For the action plans to deliver effectively, they must:

- Be co-designed with the relevant stakeholder for each particular action. For example, appropriate actors on a given action may include local governments, industry groups, regional bodies, and agricultural stakeholders.

- Engage with and leverage existing regional strategies and initiatives, such as:

    o Regional drought resilience plans.

    o Both general and agriculture-specific workforce plans (e.g., the *Queensland Agricultural Industry Workforce Plan 2022-2027)*.

    o Industry-specific roadmaps, including the *Intensive Animal Industries Roadmap 2025-2035, Future Fields*, *Sugar Plus*, the *Cotton Australia Strategic Plan 2023-2028*, the *Queensland Dairy Plan*, and others.

- Establish long-term strategies that drive growth in alignment with the core priorities of the Blueprint. For example, through the development of a dedicated Queensland Agriculture Water Strategy.

- Define measurable, accountable actions with clear timelines and performance metrics, including both economic and non-economic outcomes, such as:

    o Increases in regional farm gate value.

    o Improvements in input-use efficiency (e.g., water or energy productivity).

    o Greater regional employment and training participation.

    o Demonstrated improvements in environmental stewardship and natural resource condition, which are linked to on-farm profitability.

    o Growth in regional processing capacity, supply chain resilience, and infrastructure upgrades.

- o Strengthened regional capacity building via local leadership and place-based innovation.
- Establish transparent feedback and learning mechanisms to enable adaptive management, mid-course corrections, and incorporation of local innovation or emerging opportunities.
- Be supported by appropriate delivery infrastructure, including regional coordination groups or cross-sector steering bodies, to ensure alignment between local, state, and national efforts.

If the Blueprint's action plans are to drive meaningful and lasting impact, they must go beyond setting targets and timelines. They need to reinvest value in regional communities, build resilience across the agricultural sector, and lay the foundations for long-term sustainability. This requires focusing on secure and efficient supply chains, viable and profitable farm businesses, sustainable resource use, and vibrant, well-supported rural communities. To achieve this, action plans must be dynamic in design, inclusive in process, regionally grounded in focus whilst being linked to state wide goals, and consistently accountable in delivery.

Critical omissions from the Blueprint

Before addressing the individual priorities set out in the draft Blueprint, it is important to first acknowledge several foundational enablers conspicuously absent from or not visible in the document. Ignoring these elements will severely undermine the Blueprint's ability to deliver the long-term resilience, competitiveness, productivity, and sustainability it aims to deliver.

Biosecurity

Biosecurity must be elevated to a standalone, strategic priority within the Blueprint. Its omission risks diminishing focus, funding, and capacity for a system vital to Queensland's economy, environment, and communities. A single outbreak can devastate industries, disrupt supply chains, cause regional decline, and severely impact farm families. Queensland's biosecurity capacity has weakened over 25 years, with losses in expert staff, laboratories, and extension services weakening risk detection and response. The Blueprint must build decisively on existing frameworks like the *Intensive Animal Industries Roadmap 2025–2035,* protecting critical infrastructure such as the Cape York Biosecurity Centre and ensuring coordinated, well-funded succession planning and critically, driving engagement and action in sectors outside of agriculture.

The biosecurity system must operate holistically; any capability gaps require a coordinated response with shared responsibility and resource transfers. Industry partners must be engaged in early decision-making and trusted with outbreak information. Future resilience depends on investing in skilled personnel, raising awareness, and adopting innovative technologies like mRNA vaccines. Biosecurity is foundational to sustainable agriculture and must be explicitly prioritised and adequately resourced.

Water

Water access, use efficiency, and infrastructure remain core drivers of productivity across Queensland's irrigated and intensive livestock industries, yet the Blueprint presents no integrated approach to water strategy. This is a critical failure. Water must be treated as a strategic enabler of growth. Delays in infrastructure planning and unclear entitlement pathways have discouraged investment and innovation, despite the critical importance of secure water access for high-value agriculture.

The Blueprint must deliver strategic coordination across water policy, including modernising water trading platforms and aligning with renewable energy and land-use planning to reduce regulatory risk and encourage co-investment in regional water resilience. It must seek to actively support initiatives such as on-farm efficiency trials, smart irrigation pilots, and recycled water use, alongside short-term releases of strategic reserves to unlock investment and irrigated production.

Energy and land-use

Rising energy costs and poorly managed land-use competition are major constraints on growth, productivity, and profitability, especially in regions where infrastructure or planning settings are misaligned with agricultural needs. The Blueprint must commit to practical, impactful reforms that reduce electricity prices, including electricity tariff reform, support for agrisolar and mid-scale microgrids, and incentives for on-farm energy efficiency and battery adoption. Likewise, land-use policy requires a better balance of competing demands while protecting agricultural land and water resources. Producers must also be continually supported to make informed decisions about hosting renewables or engaging in carbon projects.

Climate adaptation

The cumulative impact of extreme weather events has already reduced farm profits by 23% (ABARES), a decline masked only by short-term productivity gains. This trajectory is not sustainable. Climate adaptation, risk management, and building preparedness and resilience must be embedded in the Blueprint, with recognition that future viability will require significant business transformation, diversification, and innovation. Government must remain open to evolving definitions of primary production to accommodate emerging models.

Disaster resilience

Disaster resilience must be treated as a core capability, not merely a crisis response mechanism. Queensland's producers face increasing climate, market, and biosecurity risks that require long-term, coordinated support. The Blueprint must seek to establish a flexible but enduring "spine" of programs that help producers manage risk, recover from shocks, and adapt over time. This includes access to tools like parametric insurance, reinsurance partnerships, and integrated recovery funding linked to on-ground practice change.

The enablers we have outlined above are not isolated or sector-specific issues. They are systemic drivers that underpin success across all industries, regions, and supply chains. Their omission weakens the strategic coherence of the Blueprint and risks short-lived, superficial outcomes. It is especially important that these enablers be embedded as overarching structural, system-wide priorities in both the design and implementation of the Blueprint.

QFF response to the Blueprint's priorities

Please see below for QFF's recommendations to strengthen each individual Blueprint priority.

'Coexistence and community support'

Outcome (as stated): Primary industries have strong protections, frameworks, and community support for their role as land and sea stewards, and for providing food security to the nation. They optimise resource use for food, fibre, and foliage production alongside other land uses.

The current framing of "coexistence" in this priority is fundamentally flawed because it treats agriculture as needing ongoing public approval, through the lens of "social licence," to justify its place in land-use decisions. This approach prioritises short-term community acceptance over recognising agriculture as an established, foundational contributor to food security, employment, land stewardship, and regional resilience. Such framing risks rendering agriculture subordinate to other emerging and competing land uses (i.e., mining, energy generation, urban expansion, and conservation), without securing its ongoing viability or embedding it in long-term land-use governance.

Agriculture already plays a vital role in sustaining regional communities, not just economically, but through deep-rooted contributions to social cohesion, local employment, food security, and stewardship of natural resources. It earns community support every day through these contributions. To suggest that agriculture must further secure its "social licence" is to ignore the legitimacy it has long since earned. Therefore, sustainable coexistence must not be treated as a public relations goal or reduced to vague notions of goodwill. Instead, it must be reframed as a strategic commitment to long-term:

- Agricultural viability over the long term.
- Environmental integrity including protection of vital natural resources including water and production land
- Regional equity.

- Innovation and resilience.

- Optimal land and water use
- The protection of overarching priorities such as food security

Moreover, the Blueprint's current delivery of this priority lacks the clarity and strategic depth required to deliver tangible outcomes in coexistence. It speaks of "strong protections" and "community support" without defining:

- What specific protections will be put in place to safeguard agricultural land and activity.

- The mechanisms and accountability measures that will ensure these protections are enforced.

- The governance approach for managing competing land uses (e.g., housing, mining, renewables, carbon projects) to avoid unintended displacement of agriculture.

- How agriculture will be prioritised and embedded in regional and strategic land-use planning processes.

- What land-use data, modelling, and risk assessments will underpin planning decisions to ensure they are current, evidence based and forward-looking.

Community recognition and support must be seen as outcomes of strong policy and planning as an evolution from this Blueprint, not the primary justification for agriculture's future. Without embedding agriculture in land-use governance, clear regulatory protections, and economic

strategy, the notion of coexistence risks becoming superficial rhetoric rather than a meaningful commitment.

Gaps and challenges

- Lack of strategic and integrated land-use planning. The call to "optimise resource use" across land sectors is hollow without a strategic planning framework. Queensland lacks strategic, anticipatory planning tools and data-informed hierarchies to manage competing pressures from agriculture, renewables, offsets, mining, and peri-urban encroachment. Weak protections, such as absent statutory overlays, out-of-data land use mapping data, and cumulative impact assessments, leave agricultural land vulnerable and reactive planning entrenched.

- Environmental offset mechanisms undermine agricultural viability. Poorly coordinated environmental offsets risk locking up productive land and threatening rural viability. Without a statewide offset strategy, these mechanisms can displace agriculture. Reform is urgently needed to ensure offsets are timely, transparent, and integrated with regional land-use planning to balance environmental goals and productive outcomes.

- Insufficient shared value and innovation support. Coexistence must go beyond minimising harm; it must enable mutual benefit. Current frameworks fail to guarantee agriculture a fair share in infrastructure, income streams, or innovation opportunities. Missed chances to support on-farm energy, microgrids, and diversification stifle regional resilience. Enabling infrastructure and forward-looking land uses must be embedded in policy.

- Exclusionary engagement and governance models. Top-down consultation approaches undermine legitimacy and local support. Existing frameworks treat producers and regional bodies as stakeholders to be managed, not planning partners. The lack of confidence in current arbitration frameworks, particularly where landholders are expected to bear their own costs, further entrenches imbalance. A shift to genuine co-design and shared governance is essential to deliver sustainable, regionally supported coexistence.

QFF's vision for 'sustainable coexistence and regional equity'

QFF advocates for a proactive, place-based model of coexistence that positions agriculture as a priority land use with strategic and economic value to regional and remote communities. Sustainable coexistence should be a shared responsibility embedded in land-use policy, regional development planning, and investment decisions. Queensland must therefore aim to:

- Support to ensure agriculture remains a long-term viable industry across productive regions.

- Maintain landholder flexibility to decide the best use of their land and ensure enterprise resilience.

- Maximise the benefits of the renewable energy transition and large-scale developments while mitigating risks to agriculture and rural communities.

- Enable new opportunities such as distributed energy, microgrids, carbon and biodiversity markets to develop whilst managing risks through appropriate legislative frameworks and support for farmers to make informed business decisions.

- Avoid duplication, cumulative impacts, and consultation fatigue through streamlined governance and planning integration.

- Empower agriculture to have a seat at the table in co-designing and influencing how community benefit funding is allocated, prioritising regional infrastructure essential to productivity and connectivity.

- Ensure compensation mechanisms are enduring, adaptive, and account for long-term impacts, such as post-development subsidence, and ensure the productive capacity of landscapes and vital resources such as water, are maintained

Recommendations for improving the Priority

1. Reframe coexistence around viability, resilience, and shared governance. Define coexistence in operational terms, focused on agricultural viability, secure land tenure, enterprise continuity, and regional prosperity, not public perception.

2. Upgrade success indicators to measure real outcomes. Move from sentiment to structural metrics, including:

   - Hectares under secure tenure.

   - Incidence and resolution of land-use conflicts.

   - Landholder participation in planning processes.

   - Agricultural access to infrastructure and income from co-located industries.

   - Community and landholder satisfaction with regional governance and coexistence frameworks.

   - The adequate protection of vital water and land resources for future generations

   - Ensuring food security is maintained for all Queenslanders

3. Clarify the framing and policy intent of the Priority. The current title and outcome are too vague. They must clearly convey a strategic commitment to safeguarding agriculture's viability and empowering rural communities to thrive in multi-use, low-emissions landscapes.

4. Establish strong, binding land use protections.

   - Introduce strategic land-use overlays for key agricultural zones based on updated mapping data

   - Require cumulative impact assessments for land-use conflicts.

   - Recognise agriculture as a statutory consideration in regional infrastructure and planning.

   - Initiate a strategic land use mapping process to identify and safeguard food, fibre, and foliage regions under climate adaptation models.

   - Provide regulatory certainty regarding private land entry and protection.

5. Urgently reform offset planning and implementation.

   - Develop a coordinated state-wide offset strategy that is co-designed by industry, producers, key stakeholders, and government.

   - Introduce land-use balancing mechanisms to prevent land lock-up.

- Ensure offset funds are delivered in a timely, performance-based manner to support productive land and viable communities.

6. Embed shared value and benefit-sharing into regional planning.

- Enable producers to benefit from adjacent land uses via access to energy, infrastructure, or diversification income.

- Recognise and reward stewardship contributions through ESG-aligned policies (carbon, water, biodiversity).

- Provide formal pathways for agriculture to influence how community benefit funding is deployed in rural areas.

7. Develop regional coexistence agreements.

- Formalise collaborative governance structures between agriculture, energy, conservation, and planning sectors.

- Provide authority and resources with regional engagement for coexistence governance.

- Support ongoing regional dialogue, planning, and decision-making capacity building.

- Clarify definitions and thresholds of "critical consequences" and the powers to halt or amend CSG development in line with landholder experience and expectations.

'Market growth and value adding'

Outcome (as stated): Primary industries are more competitive and have greater market share within existing and new markets, and from value-added products.

Success measure (as stated): Greater than 5% p.a. increase in export market growth. Increase in waste transformation to high-value products.

Achieving sustained export growth of more than 5% per annum, while strengthening competitiveness across both established and emerging markets, demands more than broad ambitions. It requires the Blueprint to confront the economic realities facing producers and move beyond fragmented efforts or isolated success stories. Queensland's competitive advantage will only emerge through coordinated, system-wide action that keeps more farmers viable and profitable for longer, addresses key challenges such as mental health and on farm safety, unlocks value in underutilised resources, and enables broader participation in expanding markets.

Profitability is the precondition for market growth. If growers and producers cannot maintain viable margins at the farm gate, they cannot invest, innovate, or take part in any value-adding opportunities that will drive the Blueprint's ambition for export expansion and competitiveness. Any strategy aimed at increasing market share must therefore prioritise farm viability and profitability across the entire sector, not just high performers, through stronger margins, targeted cost relief, and accessible support systems. Key indicators of progress must include

increases in average farm profitability, participation in value-adding supply chains, and the uptake of financial and technical support services.

Experience from supply chains undergoing sustainability transitions shows that collaborative advantage only materialises when stakeholders align their purpose and share risks and rewards. While pockets of successes exist in areas, such as on-farm solar, regional processing hubs, native foods commercialisation, these efforts remain the exception than the rule. Too often, they are siloed from broader sector strategies, undercapitalised due to limited investment readiness or access to finance, and stymied by systemic and policy barriers such as unclear regulatory pathways, fragmented program delivery, and misaligned infrastructure planning.

At present, Queensland's approach to market growth lacks a clear, integrated pathway to improve market access, enhance regional processing capacity, and reduce barriers such as regulatory complexity and water and energy costs along with supporting stronger mental health amongst farmers and regional communities and on farm safety. QFF maintains that each of these elements will be critical to the success in this priority.

Gaps and challenges

- Farm profitability under pressure. Many farms are not viable under current conditions, with margins eroded by rising input costs, stagnant returns, and climate-related losses (estimated at 23% of profits by ABARES). This is particularly relevant in workforce, energy- and water-intensive sectors like cotton, sugarcane, and horticulture.

- There is no clear maturity model to guide support or investment, and the strategy fails to distinguish between farms ready to scale and those at risk of closure. It also does not reflect a target approach to driving investment in areas that are critical to all Queenslanders eg. Food security, optimal land and water use, increasing capacity of regional communities etc.

- Impactful pricing and infrastructure constraints. Energy and water pricing structures are poorly aligned with agricultural realities, limiting the ability of farmers to manage costs or improve productivity. Meanwhile, infrastructure and processing capacity are concentrated and under-accessed, especially in regional and remote areas, constraining value-adding and local economic benefits.

- Market access and global competitiveness risks. Trade and geopolitical volatility increase market risk, while Queensland's competitive edge is eroding due to stronger international performance in logistics, transport, and packaging. Smaller and remote producers are particularly disadvantaged in accessing high-value markets.

- Insufficient regional meat processing capacity. With ongoing reductions in processing capacity and impending restrictions on live exports, Queensland lacks the infrastructure needed to expand and retain processing value in its key livestock-producing regions. This bottleneck limits regional economic development, reduces market flexibility, and risks pushing value creation offshore, despite strong production potential in northern and western regions.

- Undervalued resources and supply chain gaps. Waste streams, biomass, and agricultural feedstocks are underutilised despite their income and circular economy potential. Overemphasis on end products, without supporting feedstock input supply chains, weakens resilience and value creation.

- Fragmented and inaccessible support systems. Government support remains fragmented, siloed, and often inaccessible to the producers most in need. Biosecurity

responses are remain largely uncoordinated, posing threats to trade, investment, and supply chain stability.

- Climate and production volatility. Increasing climate variability is intensifying production risk and unpredictability, further challenging farm planning and long-term viability.

QFF's strategic vision for 'market value, growth and retention'

- Profitability is the precondition of market growth. QFF envisions a sector where farm viability drives competitiveness, with input efficiency built into all advisory services. Producers must have access to tailored financial and technical support based on their stage of development, guided by a farm business maturity model that ensures resources are targeted where they are most needed.
- Fairer energy and water pricing is critical to sustainable growth. Agriculture needs flexible, regionally responsive pricing models that reward efficient, seasonal use. Greater support is required for on-farm renewables and storage in high-cost areas, alongside a review of irrigation tariffs and delivery services to ensure water remains a growth enabler, not a constraint. Potential opportunities such as sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) and biofuels will be lost if action is not taken.
- A clear workforce strategy that addresses attraction and retention, upskilling existing workforce whilst also building a pipeline for the future must be developed if increased investment is going to take place in agriculture. The inability to attract and retain appropriately skilled workers is a significant barrier to investment into the sector.
- Strategic water planning must underpin growth. Water must be systematically embedded across all priorities, particularly land use, energy, and market development. Water policy must be integrated with productivity and cost-relief objectives. Investments must reduce delivery losses and improve efficiency, while reforms to access and entitlement processes are needed to simplify planning and give producers greater certainty and resilience.

- Agricultural waste must be transformed into opportunity. QFF supports developing circular economy precincts in sectors like sugarcane, cotton, and horticulture. Small-scale, on-farm ventures that convert waste into energy, compost, or bio-inputs must be backed by targeted incentives and logistics support to enable participation by smaller and remote producers.
- Circular economy models are now vital for regional resilience. Waste streams must be repurposed into cost-reducing inputs such as compost and stockfeed. Regional networks that retain value locally and connect bio-based products to new markets will reduce reliance on global logistics and support income diversification across Queensland's regions.
- Broader participation in value-adding. Value-adding should not only be viewed through the lens of premium products or export opportunities, but as a tool for improving farm viability. The Blueprint must promote models that use lower-grade produce, agricultural by-products, or agritourism to generate additional revenue or reduce waste. This requires targeted infrastructure investment, clearer regulatory pathways, and stronger links to consumer-facing markets and circular economy initiatives.

- Shared infrastructure is key to equitable value adding. Queensland currently lacks sufficient domestic processing and value-adding capacity, especially in regional and remote areas. This gap limits the ability of producers to participate in high-value markets and capture economic benefits locally. Co-investment in shared-use infrastructure, streamlined approvals to attract private investment, and support for cooperative models are essential to scaling regional value-adding and improving market retention.

Recommendations for improving the Priority

1. Expand the scope to explicitly link market competitiveness to farm profitability and resilience.

   - Success metrics must assess export growth alongside improvements in average farm margins, input cost ratios, and business resilience.

   - Measure improvement in producers' business readiness through uptake of advisory services and outcomes in market access, rather than participation alone.

   - Use sector-wide financial health indicators to show how interventions broaden engagement.

2. Broaden the outcome and success metric to recognise value retention within Queensland and address infrastructure gaps that limit regional participation in value-adding.

   - Broaden the success metric to capture growth in domestic value-added product sales, local processing volume, or regional branding.

   - Expand the outcome to acknowledge the role of regional infrastructure and investment readiness in enabling competitive advantage.

   - Include in the success metric growth in cooperative or shared-use value-adding infrastructure, particularly in under-served regions.

   - Specifically address Queensland's current shortfall in domestic processing capacity and its impact on regional market participation.

3. Include circular economy opportunities in the outcome and track measurable uptake in the success metrics to support diversification and resilience.

   - Include in both the outcome and success metric a commitment to circular economy practices that turn agricultural waste into high-value products.

   - Track in the success metric the proportion of agricultural waste transformed into marketable outputs and the number of farms engaged in waste-to-value initiatives.

   - Broaden the outcome to position and drive on-farm diversification, such as composting, energy generation, and bio-inputs, as a strategic pathway to competitiveness.

4. Refocus the outcome to account for volatility in trade and input markets and include efficiency and self-reliance metrics in success indicators.

   - Broaden the outcome to reflect the importance of risk mitigation strategies, such as input cost management and energy resilience, as enablers of competitiveness.

   - Include in the success metric the adoption rate of energy-efficient or renewable systems and improved irrigation practices that reduce cost exposure.

   - Add success indicators related to the reduction in average energy and water input costs as a share of production costs.

   - Ensure workforce indicators are a key priority in supporting growth.

5. Embed water security and strategic planning as core market growth drivers. Water access, pricing, and infrastructure are central to Queensland's high-value agriculture

but remain critically underrepresented in the outcome framing and success measurement.

- Reframe outcome to position water as a growth enabler.

- Prioritise water planning in regions identified for agricultural market expansion.

- Track increases in irrigation efficiency (ML/ha), reductions in delivery losses, and certainty in long-term entitlement access.

- Use investment per ML as a proxy for water infrastructure effectiveness.

Queensland's agricultural future depends on more than growing markets and it depends on keeping more farmers in business. To deliver this priority, the Blueprint must balance bold ambition with grounded support, ensuring that growth is not just possible for some, but accessible and achievable for all.

'Skilled and agile workforce'

Outcome (as stated): Primary industries have a talent pipeline meeting future skills and keeping pace with changing requirements, which includes agricultural education in schools and training that meets the needs of industry.

Success measure (as stated): Increase in graduates entering primary industries jobs. Change in workforce composition towards higher skilled and/or digital and data-enabled roles.

Queensland's agricultural sector supports over 41,500 businesses and sustains around 376,000 direct and indirect jobs across the food, fibre, and foliage supply chain. One in fourteen Queenslanders relies on the sector for employment. Despite this critical contribution, workforce pressures in the sector are intensifying. A widening skills gap is emerging in areas critical to the sector's future, including AgTech, climate-smart agriculture, and digital infrastructure. Left unaddressed, these shortages will constrain short-term productivity and compromise the long-term transition to a sustainable, low-emissions, and globally competitive agricultural economy.

To build a workforce that is skilled, agile, and fit for the future, the Blueprint must move beyond aspirational goals and directly address the structural workforce challenges already facing Queensland's primary industries. A sustainable and competitive agricultural sector depends on a talent pipeline aligned with industry transformation, but current workforce development efforts remain fragmented, reactive, and disconnected from the real-time needs of producers and agribusinesses. Without coordinated, place-based strategies that embed skills development in regional innovation ecosystems, Queensland risks falling behind in key future areas such as AgTech, climate resilience, and digital agriculture.

Experience from other sectors shows that workforce agility and capacity only emerge when education providers, employers, and communities collaborate and share responsibility for shaping training pathways. Yet today's workforce programs are often siloed, poorly integrated with industry needs, and constrained by limited regional infrastructure and employer engagement. The Blueprint's success measures of increasing graduate intake and shifting to higher-skilled roles are important but must be expanded to include workforce retention, impact on productivity, regional reach, the development of clear pathways, and participant diversity to ensure workforce initiatives support both productivity and community resilience.

Gaps and challenges

- Traditional Vocational Education and Training (VET) and training models are struggling to keep pace with rapidly evolving skills needs. Meanwhile, regional innovation ecosystems are underutilised, and producers, young people, and agribusiness leaders too often work in silos, limiting collaboration and local problem-solving.

- The disconnect between training and enterprise transformation. Many workforce initiatives are delivered in isolation from broader industry changes. This limits their relevance and impact on productivity. In many areas, local mechanisms to co-design and deliver training that reflects regional production systems and innovation priorities are underdeveloped.

- The limited scale of proven workforce models. Programs such as SmartAg, the AgTech Digital Support Work Placement Program (ADSWPP), the Industry Workforce Advisor Program (IWAP), and RJSA-backed micro-credentials have demonstrated success but remain confined to pilot phases. While place-based support has been impactful, there is limited capacity to scale and embed these approaches consistently across regions and sectors for long-term impact. Over 2,500 participants have engaged in these programs over an 18-month period, showing strong alignment with industry needs.

- Underdeveloped training in future-critical areas. There is a growing demand for skills in areas such as water and energy efficiency, water stewardship, traceability, AgTech, and climate-smart farming. These domains remain underserved in current workforce development efforts.

- The lack of employer support systems. Many agribusinesses lack workforce planning capability and need accessible support to improve HR practices, attract staff, and connect with relevant programs. Many agribusinesses, especially SMEs, face difficulty translating government policy into practical workforce strategies due to fragmented access to expert support and tailored planning tools.

- The barriers to attraction and retention. Issues such as affordable housing, childcare availability, and access to healthcare in rural areas hinder workforce stability, particularly for young people and early-career professionals.

- There is no clear pathway for school leavers to enter a career in agriculture. Universities typically only offer adhoc or program based work placement opportunities rather than formal partnerships with key agricultural employers to offer school leavers with comprehensive and clear pathways into the sector through university and industry cadet ship type programs.

QFF's strategic vision for 'Workforce'

1. Scale successful, industry-led workforce models to promote relevant skills development. Build on successful programs such as SmartAg and ADSWPP to expand offerings into:

   - Future-critical domains (e.g., water and energy efficiency and literacy, digital traceability, and climate-smart agriculture and land management).

   - Stackable micro-credentials building towards a nationally recognised "skills passport" system from entry-level to leadership.

- Placement models that improve technology uptake and productivity, with performance metrics tracking post-placement retention, productivity gains, and digital tool use.

- Underserved sectors including small-scale horticulture, Indigenous enterprises, and community-led land management.

2. Embed training within regional innovation ecosystems. Ensure that workforce development is not an isolated activity, but training is aligned with local enterprise and innovation strategies:

- Adopt stronger links and clearer pathways between producers, educators, and local employers to co-design training that is responsive and relevant.

- Encourage deeper collaboration between government, universities, and TAFE to co-invest in formal, low-cost pathways into agriculture, including subsidised entry-level programs and micro-credentials, to encourage uptake and to meet emerging skills needs.

- Encourage participation by making learning context-specific, hands-on, and aligned with regional production systems.

- Provide wrap-around support including mentoring, technical advice, and peer networks to embed practice change on the ground.

- Leverage existing regional networks, such as AgTech hubs, grower groups, and LGA-led development alliances, to align training with local innovation and investment priorities.

3. Strengthen inclusion, partnerships, and long-term capability. A resilient agricultural workforce must reflect and support the diversity of regional Queensland. Inclusive workforce development must:

- Scale industry-led workforce and training programs that have demonstrated significant success.

- Work with industry, the VET sector and willing universities to develop clear pathways into earning and learning in the agricultural sector

- Integrate workforce initiatives with broader wellbeing, community renewal, and cultural enterprise models.

- Establish Regional Futures Workforce Hubs that bring together innovation, training, and employment support under one roof to drive place-based transformation and investment-readiness.

- Support pathways into agriculture for women, migrants, neurodiverse individuals, and workers transitioning from other industries.

4. Improve access to data-driven planning and delivery. Responsive and agile workforce systems require better use of labour market insights and program evaluation. To support smarter workforce investments:

- Build on IWA participation in over 150 industry events and direct engagement with more than 8,000 stakeholders and 200 agribusinesses mapping of future capability needs to guide regional skilling priorities and program design.

- Use real-time data and local employer feedback to refine training content, delivery methods, and outreach efforts.

- Ensure that performance measures focus on practical impact, such as technology uptake, team capability, and retention of skilled staff.

- Provide regional workforce data dashboards to support decision-making by employers, training providers, and local governments.

- Establish a feedback loop between government, industry, and communities to ensure a strong alignment with current and emerging industry priorities. and inform funding allocation.

Recommendations for improving this Priority

1. Expand the outcome to reflect the full workforce development pipeline and regional transformation potential.

   - Broaden the outcome to reflect the full pipeline of workforce development, from early exposure and attraction, through skills development and practical placement, to long-term retention and leadership in agriculture.

   - Position workforce development as a critical enabler of industry transformation, regional resilience, digital adoption, and climate-smart growth, rather than a standalone policy area.

   - Prioritise the need for a digitally capable, diverse, and regionally embedded workforce, capable of driving innovation and responding to future challenges and market shifts.

   - Recognise that inclusive workforce strategies support broader goals around economic diversification, cultural enterprise, and regional wellbeing.

2. Broaden success indicators to reflect long-term capability, inclusion, and system transformation, ensuring that workforce programs support both enterprise productivity and broader community resilience.

   - Track career progression through stackable micro-credentials and a "skills passport" system to enable clear advancement from entry-level roles to strategic leadership.

   - Monitor real-world impacts such as technology uptake, team productivity, enterprise performance, and embedded practice change resulting from workforce initiatives.

   - Include workforce retention metrics, especially for graduates and early-career workers placed in agribusiness roles, drawing on successful models like SmartAg, IWAP, and ADSWPP.

   - Measure diversity of participation, including improved access and outcomes for First Nations peoples, women, youth, migrants, neurodiverse individuals, and workers transitioning from other industries.

   - Reflect workforce participation across a broader range of sectors, including small-scale horticulture, cultural enterprises, and community-based land stewardship.

- Align metrics with regional and industry transformation goals to ensure success measures reflect meaningful, place-based impact and not just enrolment or completion.

Queensland's agricultural workforce is not just a productivity lever; it is the foundation of the sector's future resilience. The Blueprint must commit to working with industry in building a skilled, inclusive, and regionally embedded workforce that can drive innovation, respond to complexity, and sustain rural communities through transition.

'Shared infrastructure'

Outcome (as stated): Primary industries have access to infrastructure enabled through coordinated planning, shared usage, and investment by the private and public sector.

Success measure (as stated): Increase in access to primary industries enabling infrastructure.

The term "shared infrastructure" is vague in conveying the strategic intent, or the specific types of infrastructure required to drive agricultural productivity and regional development. A clearer descriptor, such as "critical enabling infrastructure for supply chains and regional productivity," would better capture the breadth and importance of what is needed. As currently written, the outcome suggests a general improvement in access, but does not clearly distinguish between infrastructure types, functions, or intended impacts. This risks underplaying the transformative potential of strategic infrastructure investment.

Across Queensland, many growers and producers continue to face systemic constraints due to fragmented, underfunded, and poorly coordinated infrastructure systems. Gaps in post-harvest logistics, cold storage, freight routes, domestic processing capacity, water delivery, and digital connectivity reduce efficiency, raise input and transaction costs, and erode confidence in long-term investment. These deficiencies disconnect producers from markets, limit adoption of innovation, and reduce the competitiveness of Queensland's primary industries.

The Blueprint appropriately recognises infrastructure as a foundational economic enabler, not just a support service. However, the simplistic success measure of "increased access" glosses over the need for infrastructure that is fit-for-purpose, regionally responsive, strategically aligned, and climate-resilient. A more sophisticated approach would consider not just access but connectivity, integration, equity, resilience, and economic performance.

Gaps and challenges
- Lack of definition and scope clarity. "Shared infrastructure" lacks specificity. Does it include water, energy, transport, digital, or processing infrastructure? Without a clear scope, planning and investment remain diffuse and fragmented.

- Fragmented governance and misaligned investment. Multiple agencies and levels of government often invest in infrastructure with limited coordination. This results in duplicated efforts, overlooked priorities, and poor alignment with agricultural or regional development strategies.

- Infrastructure access inequity. Smaller or more remote producers are frequently excluded from infrastructure benefits due to lack of economies of scale or insufficient influence in planning processes.

- Disconnect between infrastructure and supply chain priorities. Key infrastructure gaps-especially in cold chain logistics, intermodal freight, water storage/delivery, and broadband-continue to limit regional productivity and competitiveness.

- Limited resilience planning. Much of the current infrastructure is vulnerable to climate extremes, with inadequate investment in flood-resilient transport, water security, and digital redundancy.

- Weak local voice in planning. Infrastructure decisions are too often made without meaningful local engagement, resulting in misaligned projects that do not meet the practical needs of producers or reflect regional growth pathways.

QFF's strategic vision for 'Infrastructure and supply chains'

1. Establish clear governance for shared infrastructure that defines the roles of public and private investment, advances cross-sector collaboration, and promotes meaningful regional stakeholder engagement.

   - Create shared strategic priorities across sectors to guide coordinated infrastructure investment decisions.

   - Align public and private investments with these priorities to maximise impact, transparency, and accountability.

   - Incorporate an iterative evaluation process with ongoing regional stakeholder input to monitor progress, assess outcomes, and adapt governance structures and investments over time.

   - Strategic investment decisions must be guided by shared priorities and informed by a clear understanding of regional needs, industry trends, and future growth trajectories.

2. Planning for significant, long-term investment in critical infrastructure, including road, rail, digital connectivity, water storage and delivery, biosecurity, and regional processing capacity.

   - Upgrading key transport routes to improve year-round market access and reduce logistics costs.

   - Enhancing flood-resilient transport infrastructure to safeguard connectivity under extreme weather.

   - Expanding broadband access in regional and remote areas to facilitate AgTech adoption and data-driven farming.

   - Increasing shared water infrastructure investments to support sustainable agricultural productivity.

   - Growing cold chain logistics and processing capacity to improve product quality, reduce losses, and foster regional economic growth.
   - Protecting and upgrading critical biosecurity infrastructure, such as the Cape York Biosecurity Centre, which serves as the northern frontline for preventing and responding to threats from Papua New Guinea and Indonesia.

Recommendations for improving this Priority

1. Clarify the definition and scope of 'shared infrastructure.'

- Replace the vague term with a clearer expression such as "critical infrastructure for supply chain resilience and regional productivity."
- Focus on infrastructure categories that unlock economic value, reduce producer risk, and support innovation: transport, digital, water, and processing capacity.

2. Develop a strong success metric based on measurable productivity, access equity, and supply chain efficiency.

- Implement continuous evaluation frameworks to guide investment decisions based on evidence of impact and evolving regional needs (i.e., distributed energy infrastructure).
- Prioritise infrastructure that strengthens regional supply chains, enhances transport resilience, and reduces waste, delays, and costs.
- Recognise water infrastructure as foundational, with strategic investment in shared water storage, delivery systems, on-farm and regional recycled water reuse systems, and water-efficient technologies.

3. Expand the success metric beyond infrastructure access to include qualitative and outcome-based indicators that reflect improvements in market access, supply chain efficiency, regional connectivity, and local processing growth. This must include:

- Reductions in post-harvest losses and supply chain waste, particularly in perishables.
- Growth in local processing and value-adding enterprises, as a measure of regional diversification.
- Improved market access and transport connectivity for remote and underserved producers.
- Data-driven tracking of investment outcomes, through regional infrastructure dashboards updated annually.
- Increased stakeholder satisfaction and alignment, captured through local engagement feedback loops.
- Expanded infrastructure access across diverse producer types, especially small, remote, and underrepresented enterprises.

QFF believes a more strategic and inclusive approach to shared infrastructure will help deliver maximum impact from public and private investment, while supporting innovation, value-adding, and equitable growth across the state.

'Accelerated innovation, readiness and adoption'

Outcome (as stated): Primary industries have access to a pipeline of new technologies and practices to seize opportunities and anticipate local and global disruptors.

Success measure (as stated): Increase industry adoption of AgTech.

QFF believes digital and AgTech to be one of the most critical enablers across every priority within the Blueprint. From improving productivity and enhancing sustainability to unlocking traceability, workforce transformation, and market access, the success of Queensland's agriculture depends heavily on how effectively digital tools and innovations are deployed and adopted across farms and supply chains. National estimates from the Australian Farm Institute (AFI) suggest that AgTech alone could contribute more than $20 billion annually to Australia's gross value of production. This signals the scale of opportunity available to Queensland if the right innovation and adoption conditions are in place.

However, the current framing of this priority is overly narrow and risks placing undue responsibility on industry to drive adoption, when in fact producers are already investing heavily in technology, skills, and digital infrastructure. By focusing predominantly on the metric of "increased industry adoption of AgTech," the Blueprint simplifies what is in reality a complex and systemic challenge. Adoption is not just a matter of access or willingness. It depends on a suite of enabling factors, including connectivity, digital literacy, data governance, trusted advisory systems, and the relevance of solutions to Queensland's diverse production environments. Without this broader ecosystem in place, technologies may be available but remain unsuitable, underutilised, or unscalable.

There is also a risk in continuing to treat innovation as a linear pipeline, research, develop, deploy, without sufficient feedback loops from producers, regions, and on-ground realities Increasing adoption for its own sake is an insufficient goal. A more meaningful metric would prioritise technologies that are cost-effective, scalable, and developed through co-design with producers. There is also a compelling case for identifying which platforms and standards already exist and making strategic policy decisions around what is most efficient and beneficial to implement. Without addressing the underlying systems that enable adoption, much of this potential will remain unrealised.

Gaps and challenges

- An emerging innovation divide. Technology uptake in Queensland agriculture remains uneven, with a growing divide between producers who can access and benefit from AgTech, and those facing structural, financial, or skills-based barriers. This risks entrenching inequities and limiting sector-wide transformation.
- Lack of enabling infrastructure and support systems. Many producers lack the connectivity, advisory services, and training needed to adopt and use digital tools. Inadequate broadband access renders cloud platforms, sensors, and digital recordkeeping unusable, while gaps in trusted advice, skills, and financial support constrain adoption readiness.

- Disconnect between R&D and on-farm reality. Too often, AgTech remains supply-driven, developed in labs or urban contexts, with limited producer input. As a result, technologies may fail to reach commercial maturity or practical relevance, especially in Queensland's varied climatic and enterprise conditions. This disconnect reduces practical relevance and adoption. Current models, dominated by universities, government programs, or siloed R&D-struggle to commercialise innovation effectively. Without structural reform and deeper industry co-design, this gap will persist.

- Affordability, interoperability, and market access barriers. High upfront costs, lack of flexible finance, poor interoperability, and limited return-on-investment clarity deter small and medium producers. Incompatible systems and vendor lock-in raise long-term costs and reduce confidence in technology investment.

QFF's strategic vision for 'AgTech'

- Innovation is demand-led and place-based, developed with and for producers to reflect local production systems, climatic conditions, and enterprise diversity.

- Adoption is supported by a fit-for-purpose ecosystem of skills training, advisory support, finance models, and trust-based data governance.

- Technology systems are open, interoperable, and modular, allowing producers to adapt and customise tools to suit their operations without being locked into proprietary platforms.

- Innovation hubs are embedded regionally, connecting producers, developers, researchers, and advisors to co-create solutions and share learnings.

- Producer-led innovation frameworks are embedded into policy and funding structures, enabling those closest to the problem, and the solution, to lead the innovation process, supported by fit-for-purpose partnerships with researchers and commercial actors.

Recommendations for improving this Priority

1. Expand the outcome and success measures.

- Reframe success around readiness, integration, and sustained use, not just access.

- Include enabling conditions such as skills, advisory support, digital trust, and workflow integration into the outcome statement.

- Differentiate between passive uptake and active, outcome-driven use, using metrics such as:

  o Increase in productivity or input efficiency on farms using digital tools.

  o Reduction in decision-making time via digital advisory platforms.

  o Adoption of data-enabled traceability systems across supply chains.

  o Increase in number of producers engaging in digital skills training or regional innovation initiatives.

2. Invest in infrastructure, skills, and advisory ecosystems.

- Close the connectivity gap through context-specific broadband models (e.g. satellite, LoRaWAN) adapted to remote and regional contexts.

- Establish a statewide AgTech extension network to support regionally targeted training and advisory services.

- Develop peer networks and communities of practice to foster grassroots innovation and peer-to-peer learning.

- Whilst smart farms have a role to play, they are only one part of the ecosystem and investment must support a wholistic ecosystem that effectively drives industry engagement.

3. Embed co-design and place-based innovation systems.

- Support regional testbeds, innovation precincts, and demonstration farms that validate technologies in Queensland-specific production environments.

- Promote interoperability standards and open data architectures to increase flexibility and reduce switching costs.

- Establish mechanisms for early-stage producer input into product design and field testing.

- Redirect funding from top-down, institutionally led innovation models toward producer-led and commercially focused development programs.

4. Align policy and investment with cost-effective technology pathways

- Shift from a "more technology" mindset to a "most effective technology" strategy, focused on return on investment, scalability, and producer utility.

- Identify and prioritise high-ROI technologies ready for widespread adoption (e.g., remote sensing, predictive analytics, water-use efficiency tools).

- Encourage adoption frameworks that are self-validating; if a solution does not deliver value to the producer, it will not be paid for or sustained. Let commercial relevance drive uptake.

Queensland's ability to harness the full potential of AgTech will depend not just on what innovations are available, but on how effectively they are adopted, adapted, and scaled across diverse regions and enterprises. The Blueprint provides a solid foundation but must evolve to reflect the real-world complexity of innovation systems and their adoption.

'Confidence in system setting'

Outcome (as stated): Primary industries are underpinned by appropriate levels of regulation and systems, which provide stability, certainty, and fairness across the supply chain.

Success measure (as stated): 25% reduction in regulatory burden.

The priority of "Confidence in System Settings" rightly acknowledges that regulation plays a foundational role in agricultural productivity, investment, and resilience. However, the terminology is vague and the framing lacks precision. "Confidence in system settings" appears to be a euphemism for reducing regulatory red tape, but clearer, more actionable language is needed to reflect the real goal: delivering smarter, streamlined, fit-for-purpose, and adaptive regulation that supports innovation and certainty across Queensland's diverse primary industries.

The Priority's success target of a 25% reduction in regulatory burden is a promising headline commitment, but in reality, a one dimensional, potentially meaningless target that risks being just a symbolic gesture unless matched by a fundamental rethinking of the regulatory environment in which Queensland's primary industries operate. The outcome, to provide "stability, certainty and fairness across the supply chain," is aspirational but underdeveloped, and the success measure oversimplifies the deeply embedded and systemic nature of regulatory complexity in agriculture.

While each individual regulation may be justified by its specific purpose, their cumulative effect often results in a complex and fragmented regulatory environment that works against the very objectives the Blueprint aims to achieve; namely, stability, fairness, and investor confidence.

The resulting complexity not only increases compliance costs and administrative burdens but also furthers uncertainty and risk aversion, discouraging innovation and long-term investment. Addressing these systemic challenges requires a holistic approach to regulatory design and governance, one that prioritises integration, clarity, and proportionality, so that regulations collectively reinforce, rather than undermine, the sector's productivity and resilience.

Gaps and challenges

- Disconnect and inconsistency across agencies and jurisdictions. Regulatory frameworks are developed and enforced by multiple disconnected departments. This leads to contradictory requirements, duplication, and delays.

- Regulatory systems disconnected from industry realities. Many regulatory systems are out of step with modern agricultural practices, limiting their effectiveness and deterring innovation. This is evident in areas such as farm renewables, climate resilience, and biosecurity compliance. Outdated regulatory frameworks also inhibit on-farm safety and operator excellence, failing to keep pace with new and evolving technologies and workforce standards.

- Power imbalances in supply chains allow supermarkets to control pricing, contracts, and quality standards with limited transparency, creating risks for growers. Issues such as unclear pricing, unfair contract terms, biased dispute resolution, inconsistent product standards, and weak enforcement undermine fairness.

- Delays and uncertainty in infrastructure and development approvals. Unclear regulatory pathways for water infrastructure, microgrids, land offsets, and agritourism ventures constrain long-term investment and limit producers' ability to manage risks.

- Disjointed land-use planning frameworks. The lack of a coordinated, whole-of-state land use and offsets strategy creates confusion and can result in productive land being locked up unnecessarily. Meanwhile, regulatory decision-making often does not incorporate timely data, evidence, or risk assessments, reducing system responsiveness and accountability. This is particularly prevalent in land-use planning and decision-making.

- Regional capacity gaps and outdated compliance tools. In many regions, producers lack the digital infrastructure and skills to comply with complex regulatory requirements, further entrenching disadvantage.

- Overly reactive NRM and climate frameworks. Current approaches are focused on disaster response rather than proactive risk management and market-based incentives for environmental outcomes that are linked to the opportunity for improved profitability.

QFF's strategic vision for 'Regulation'

1. Review and modernise outdated regulatory frameworks. Review and align inconsistent or outdated laws across jurisdictions, with a focus on:

   - Transport, ag-vet chemical access, biosecurity, and native vegetation.

   - Water strategies, landholder offsets and biodiversity frameworks.

   - Emerging areas such as distributed energy and climate resilience.

   - Relationships between retailers and suppliers, especially in the horticulture sector.

   - Current planning regulations and inconsistency of application at LGA level that unnecessarily prohibits growth and expansion.

2. Align regulation with ESG, trade, and market standards. Ensure Queensland's systems are compatible with global sustainability and traceability requirements by:

- Integrating ESG-aligned metrics into compliance tools.

- Enabling producers to meet domestic and international certification schemes.

- Reducing barriers to market access and attracting sustainable investment.

- Invest in the enhancement of existing BMP programs to deliver on ESG reporting for producers and avoid duplication or additional administration burdens.

3. Protect and coordinate system-critical functions, including biosecurity infrastructure. Strengthen whole-of-system governance over strategic risk areas such as biosecurity by:

- Benchmark and monitor biosecurity capacity across agencies, industry, and research providers to detect critical skills and infrastructure gaps.
- Drive effective partnerships in the delivery of biosecurity protections with industry and increase engagement of sectors outside of agriculture to actively play their role.

- Identifying and protecting critical infrastructure (e.g., regional labs, border inspection sites, emergency response capabilities).

- Establishing contingency plans and transition pathways when roles shift between government, industry, and research providers.

- Incorporate existing strategic work, such as the *Intensive Animal Industries Roadmap*, into broader regulatory reforms to ensure alignment and avoid duplication.

4. Improve transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making. Strengthen regulatory governance by:

- Requiring clear regulatory impact assessments.

- Publishing performance metrics and timeframes.

- Establishing independent oversight of major reforms.

Recommendations for improving this Priority

1. Reframe the priority with clearer language and broader scope.

- The term "regulatory burden" lacks a shared and measurable definition. Without this, the 25% reduction goal risks being unsubstantiated, difficult to evaluate, one dimensional and meaningless.

- Expand the outcome to focus on predictability, transparency, and regional alignment as the real drivers of confidence and the development of a fit-for-purpose regulatory framework

2. Establish clear, measurable, and multifaceted regulatory reform metrics. The Blueprint's current success measure of a "25% reduction in regulatory burden" is a well-intentioned but overly simplistic metric.

- Without a clear, shared definition of "regulatory burden," including financial costs, administrative effort, decision timelines, regulatory volatility, and stakeholder trust, progress will be difficult to measure or verify.

- Success metrics must capture qualitative dimensions such as producer satisfaction, perceived fairness, and clarity, alongside quantitative reductions in red tape and compliance costs.

- As an example, efforts to enhance biosecurity must also strike a better balance between risk management and practical implementation, improving system responsiveness without imposing excessive documentation or facilitation burdens on producers.

3. Integrate regulatory systems across departmental portfolios and agencies to overcome structural disconnect. The root cause of regulatory burden is entrenched siloing of jurisdictional responsibilities and disjointed policy development, which the Blueprint only partially acknowledges.

   - A meaningful reform agenda requires the creation of unified, cross-agency frameworks that align land use, water licensing, energy access, climate adaptation, and environmental regulations.

   - This integration must go beyond coordination to actively resolve contradictory requirements, overlapping compliance processes, and unclear decision-making authority.

4. Make regulation smarter. Reduction in regulatory burden should not be conflated with deregulation or superficial rule cutting. The Blueprint must emphasise smarter regulation that drives innovation and performance.

   - Risk-based approaches, which focus compliance efforts on high-impact areas and reward demonstrable outcomes, reduce unnecessary burden without compromising policy goals.

   - Removing obsolete or unjustified regulations is required but must be accompanied by strong impact assessments to avoid unintended consequences.

   - Support compliance through capability building. Provide targeted training to help producers understand their regulatory obligations and what they need to do to remain compliant. This improves uptake, reduces errors, and builds confidence in regulatory systems.

5. Embed genuine co-design and regional engagement principles in regulatory reform. Regulatory frameworks are often developed in isolation from the producers and regional communities they affect, which contributes to misalignment and mistrust.

   - Meaningful consultation and engagement with growers and producers, and other key stakeholders to improve the relevance, regional fit, and practical feasibility of rules.

   - This participatory approach enables legitimacy, increases compliance rates, and builds trust in regulatory institutions, which is critical for long-term system confidence.

   - Regional variations in production systems, climate risks, and community priorities require locally tailored regulatory solutions rather than one-size-fits-all mandates.

Reducing red tape is of course broadly supported, but the Blueprint's current framing does not go far enough to address the structural issues undermining trust, stability, and investment in Queensland agriculture. What is needed is not just less regulation, but better regulation:

smarter, more aligned, fit-for-purpose, and more responsive framework to the sector's evolving needs.

Conclusion

QFF supports the intent of the Queensland Primary Industries Prosper 2050 Blueprint and recognises its potential to help deliver a profitable, resilient, and sustainable future for Queensland agriculture. Realising this potential, however, will require more than high-level intent. The Blueprint must adopt a whole-of-system and whole-of-government approach that places producers at the centre and embeds critical enablers, such as water, energy, biosecurity, land-use planning, disaster resilience, and climate adaption, as foundational components, not peripheral considerations.

The success of the Blueprint depends on meaningful and enduring partnerships, beyond consultation, to encourage deep, co-designed collaboration between government, industry, research institutions, and regional communities to be able to deliver on action plans. These partnerships must be underpinned by transparency, shared accountability, action plans supported by investment commitments and a focus on delivering practical, place-based solutions that reflect the lived realities of Queensland producers.

To avoid repeating the shortcomings of past strategies, the Blueprint must be clearly resourced, locally informed, and economically viable at farm and regional scales. It must deliver tangible actions and measurable outcomes that support on-the-ground implementation and sustained sectoral confidence.

QFF urges the Queensland Government to incorporate the evidence-based recommendations outlined in this submission to ensure the Blueprint becomes a durable and effective roadmap for agricultural prosperity, one that empowers the sector to lead with confidence, innovation, and profitability over the next 25 years and beyond.

Yours sincerely

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Chief Executive Officer

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